



# PENDARREN HOUSE NEWSLETTER

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

No. 11 June 2013

## News

### Swimming Pool

After a lengthy winter rest the swimming pool has exceeded its minimum temperature and is back in use. The pupils of Devonshire Hill Primary School were the first of 2013 to test the temperature and, since then, pupils from two other schools have taken the plunge. The sunny weather is helping to ensure that the pool is heated for the rest of the summer. If your school is visiting in the next month or so, don't forget to pack your costume and towel!



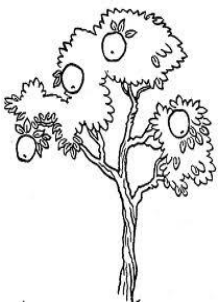
**Knotty problems!** If you are staying in the Greig Annexe, then we have a new challenge for you. In the Common Room there is a display board with examples of many of the knots used by the Pendarren staff. See if you can tie all the knots on our knots board.

### Camping Equipment for Duke of Edinburgh Award Groups

Following the increased popularity of the Duke of Edinburgh courses run here at Pendarren, we have purchased some new equipment to help those groups who are missing a few bits. We now have a good supply of tents, cooking stoves, sleeping bags and roll mats for those who need additional kit. Now all we need is the summer!



The advantage of using Pendarren for D of E groups is that the Pendarren instructors have local knowledge of the area including the black spots for phone signals and hazardous areas such as roads with no verges. Pendarren instructors have been trained and assessed to look after groups in the terrain that D of E groups will encounter; qualifications include the Mountain Leader Award and Mountain Instructor Certificate. We also try to keep the price as low as possible to ensure that the D of E Award is available to all.



### Pendarren's Trees

We have had an inspection of the trees in our grounds and some are nearing the end of their lives. We have planted many common trees and hope to replant some specimen trees that we have lost. If anyone wants to donate or bring a tree our field faces south west, is mostly well drained and the soil is fairly neutral. Our trees include oak, ash, beech, elm, hazel, apple (several varieties), coast redwood, Corsican pine, Scots pine, weeping willow, silver birch, crack willow, weeping fir, leylandii, laurel, acer, sycamore, sweet chestnut, poplar, rhododendron, larch, yew and cypresses. In the autumn we are going to send some fruit and sprigs from our old apple trees to some experts to find out which varieties we have. That's if the staff don't eat them all first!

### The Canoe Store

As was reported in the last Pendarren newsletter, we have taken delivery of an extra canoe fleet, thanks to a grant from the Tottenham Grammar School Foundation and a donation from The Friends of Pendarren. In order to accommodate the extra canoe equipment the storage area has been rebuilt by Pendarren staff.

**Risley Avenue Primary School**  
**15-19 April 2013**

I love Pendarren. It's a one in a million experience. The best parts were spending time with my friends and doing canoeing and high ropes. I would definitely like to do them again. Oh and the staff they are just a blessing. I hope I can come back soon.  
Nikaisha

Pendarren was a once in a lifetime experience that was breathtaking. I overcame my fears and built independence and confidence.  
Riyadh

Pendarren will be cherished in my heart forever, I'll remember the sun. Andi

Pendarren is an experience of a lifetime. It is the crème-de-la-crème and is totally mad, the best. Elyah



**St James CE Primary School**  
**22-26 April 2013**

I loved the activities like high ropes as it pushed me to my limits but it was still extremely fun. In the morning I was always looking forward to all the activities. Lucy

I liked the Big Pit and the adventure journey because it was really exciting and fun. Daniel

I love the activities at Pendarren, especially the high ropes. Every morning you wake up to a delicious breakfast. The feel of the fresh air filling your lungs makes you feel exhilarated and refreshed. The dorms are so big and it's really funny when you hurriedly try to tidy up the dorms in time for inspection. Lula

It's in a lovely place with unique animals and plants and plenty of space to run about. Freddie

The Pendarren activities are SUPER fun especially the wet ones! They are really enjoyable and you are always grinning at the end of the day! Martin

Pendarren is an amazing place. I feel like I have freedom and feel so excited every day when I wake up here. Ruby

The coastal visit was amazing! Because we found a lot more creatures in the rock pools than I thought we would, like shrimps, hermit-crabs and some little fish. Jessie



**Hornsey School for Girls**  
**3-5 May 2013**

Hornsey brought a group of year 11 pupils on an Intensive **GCSE Maths Weekend** course. The course involved the girls having intense maths lessons in the classrooms at Pendarren over the bank holiday weekend. These were interspersed with mathematics based problem solving exercises and orienteering in the grounds along with data collection exercises in the local area.

*"The idea of an intensive GCSE maths weekend with Year 11 sounded like a nightmare! However I was thoroughly impressed with the outdoor problem solving, confidence building and real life maths sessions provided by Pendarren. This balanced with targeted maths lessons I believe has moved our students much closer towards their target levels."*

**Staff at Hornsey School for Girls**

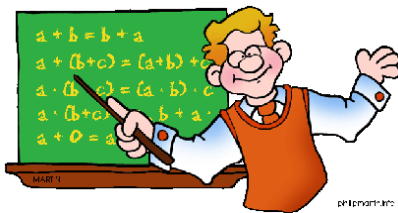
When I first arrived at Pendarren I thought we would be spending our weekend rock climbing etc. But we didn't. It was still lots of fun though! Everything we did was based around maths, including our outside activities. Putting us into teams and making us look for equations stuck on the trees outside helped me build my teamwork skills. I learnt to look out for things, I would usually ignore and I can easily apply that to doing a maths exam paper. The tight schedule we had made me better with time

keeping, I feel that in an exam now I can answer questions quickly and efficiently. Pendarren was a great experience.

*Rhianne*

A lot of hard work was required, but I didn't mind doing the work because I know I need to do everything to be successful in maths. I had so much fun and it gave me time to be away from a busy and stressful place – home and school – to a countryside where maths was more enjoyable than ever. I was able to spend time with people who are at the same level as me which also helped me as we were able to share our skills.

*Duygu*



### Rhodes Avenue Primary School 8-10 May 2013

60 pupils from Rhodes Avenue Year 5 visited us this year for a three day trip. The students had a superb time trying different activities, but also spent a whole day on a River Study to support their classroom learning. The classes were able to come as a complete group along with one child who has cerebral palsy and who made great use of Pendarren's all terrain wheelchair to visit parts of the National Park that he would otherwise not be able to reach. The days also included the groups team building as they Adventure Walked, Canoeed, Climbed or dangled around on the High Ropes.



### St Johns School RC School, Chigwell 13-17 May 2013

**George:** The thing I liked best was the Adventure Walk when we went behind the

waterfall. Then we slid down the rocks and got soaked.

**Amal:** I enjoyed it when everyone was together and trying different things.

**Genevieve :** The Big Pit was great! I said that I would like to work in the mine and that I wanted to live in the mine. The miners used horses to pull drams. The horses' names were Essex, Miner and Victor.

**Harry:** Every day we had to keep our bedrooms tidy for room inspection. My room was Blorenge. We kept it really tidy and on Friday we got 11 points. I really loved the food. The breakfast was lovely and I liked helping to serve the others. Thank you cooks, it was pukka!



**Molly:** I liked the climbing best because it was good fun. I wasn't nervous. I climbed right to the top and abseiled down. I would like to do it again. I also really liked walking up Sugar Loaf Mountain. It was very cold and blowy at the top and our faces were painful because they were being hit by hail stones.

**Evie:** On Monday we climbed Sugar Loaf Mountain. I was scared that I would not get to the top. I was really happy with myself when we reached the top. I would love to do it again. I was looking forward to going into caves - it was fantastic and when we came out I felt amazing and I was very, very happy of myself. I would like to go again!

**Kamran:** it was funny when the mini bus got stuck in the water.

**Sean:** What I liked was the food at breakfast we had cereals, toast and cooked food. For lunch we had sandwiches, fruit, biscuits, cakes and chocolate. They were lovely. For dinner we had pizza, lasagne, curry, fish and chips. For dessert we had cake, ice cream. The food was so good! One evening Steve brought his guitar for Mr K to sing some songs for us.



**Adrian:** I enjoyed going up the mountain because it was good exercise for me. I would like to go again.

**Arjun:** I liked the food and trying new things.

**Daniel:** I enjoyed the caving, it was something I didn't think I would be able to do.

**Eilish :** We went to a museum all about mining called Big Pit and we looked at coal and watched a short film about the tools they used. One night we got a chance to look at the moon on a telescope.

**Ryan:** I liked canoeing with Mr. K. I shared a room with Tom, Sean, Charlie and George. I liked climbing Sugar Loaf mountain.

**Grace:** I like the caves and I climbed a mountain. It was hard work but good fun. I shared a room with Evie, Molly and Genevieve.



### **Devonshire Hill Primary School 20-24 May 2013**

Devonshire Hill pupils spent some time tidying up their school's plot in Pendarren's Sensory Garden. Lots of faces were pulled whilst smelling and tasting a variety of herbs. The children enjoyed being outside in the Brecon Beacons National Park, rolling down a hill, walking through woodland and splashing in a river. In the evening the group thought about what they would like to achieve as a group; the following was decided upon:-

#### **What we hope to achieve:**

- Team work - boys and girls working together.
- Taking part in new activities, which are physical.
- Conquering fears - spiders, heights, being away from home, the dark, dogs, mice.
- How to do things for ourselves eg making a bed.
- Get used to outdoor living.
- Use the things we learned at Pendarren at home and in school.

#### **Poem by Joyce and Faith:**

Roses are red,  
Violets are blue,  
Pendarren is fun,  
So try it too,  
We learn,  
We play,  
We even get to stay.

The activities are cool,  
They even have a pool.  
Even though I miss my family,  
I'm trying to live by myself.  
Because I know when I  
Grow up I'd be somewhere else.



### **The Brook Special School 21-23 May 2013**

The Brook visited with a group of their Year 6 students who all took part in a wide range of activities. They especially enjoyed their canoe trip and picnic lunch followed by some awesome climbing.

We really couldn't have had a better time, just wish we were staying for longer.

Everything has been perfect and we have seen new sides to the children – Joshua being so brave and climbing to the top of the climbing wall. Pavel listening to the birds and singing and laughing as we rowed down the canal.

The children have all been so happy and loved it so much, which means we have too. The Fir was perfect for us and we have felt relaxed, what a view!

Neil looked after us so well and all of the staff have been so understanding of our pupils. Can't wait for next year!"

*The Brook Staff Team*





## Muswell Hill Cobras U13 Football Team 24-26 May 2013

The Muswell Hill Cobras had a weekend celebrating their winning of the league. Tommy wrote this report:

“On the first day we went to the caves, which was great fun, educational and very challenging. There were some places where the lads in our group found it challenging; especially the abseiling into the cave. On the second day we went canoeing and on the high ropes. The canoeing on the river was really fun and very sunny although the water was cold! We are about to do high ropes, which looks really exciting. I’m just about to do them now, feeling really nervous!”



## St Martin of Porres RC Primary School 27-31 May 2013

The summer sun showed its face here at Pendarren this week meaning that as well as enjoying the studies and activities on offer, the children and staff also enjoyed an ice cream or two when the opportunity arose. The coastal visit was a particular success with a great variety of creatures found in the rockpools of Caswell Bay for us to study. The children made full use of the evening activity options and enjoyed Daniel Morden (the story teller), the indoor orienteering, the rock room and tuck shop.



## THE FIRS

A group of teachers and heads from Haringey, along with their families, had a great Easter bank holiday weekend in the sun. As well as enjoying the mountains they climbed and abseiled on the Pendarren Tower.



During the May half term break another member of staff from a Haringey primary school, with her family, visited The Firs. Having visited in the past, they progressed from a canoe trip down the canal to a river trip (including pub lunch stop). They all did the on-site orienteering course – making as much noise as a primary school group – and rounded off their visit with a walk up Allt yr Esgair to take in the views of Brecon, Talybont and Llangors Lake.



## FRIENDS OF PENDARREN

The Tipi has been repaired following damage in the autumn and is back up for the summer. The size of the Tipi meant that three people were needed to help to sew it back together.

The Friends continue to purchase replacement cameras and the CD's/DVD's.

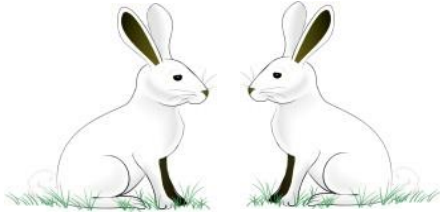
The Friends also subsidise Daniel Morden the Storyteller.

The Friends committee meets several times a year, members are currently looking at ways to involve other people who have expressed their wish to support Pendarren.



## WILDLIFE AT PENDARREN

The Pendarren rabbit population fluctuates over the years, this year there are plenty of young rabbits grazing on our lawns in the morning. For several years now we have seen a white rabbit on the bank above the high ropes course, we now have two white rabbits.

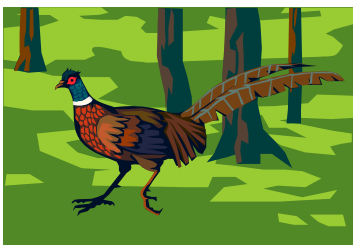


We have found evidence of another bat species at Pendarren – this time it is a noctule bat. This species likes to hide in deep crevices in the bark of old trees, in this case it has chosen one of our Coast Redwoods which has a red fibrous bark. Our redwoods are small at around 30m but they are still growing, the tallest ones in the world are over 100m.

The house martins have just arrived back at Pendarren having spent the winter in Africa. They are going to have to rebuild some nests as these were disturbed during the refurbishment last autumn. They traditionally nest under the eaves of the main house.

A pheasant appears to have established his territory at Pendarren and we hear him calling from various bits of shrubbery around the grounds.

The sheep are also back in the field, they appeared to be very excited when they arrived – there was so much grass to eat it was as if they could not decide which bit to eat next!



## ADMIN

### Educational Visits – HSV1

Haringey Health and Safety team have designated Pendarren House as Category 3 for school visits; this requires Haringey schools to inform Haringey Health and Safety Team of their visit. As Pendarren is inspected by Haringey's

Health and Safety Team, some parts of the form do not need to be filled in with as much detail as would be required if you took groups out of school to a organisation that was not managed by Haringey. Guidance on filling in HSV1 – Application for Approval of an Educational Visit – is on our website under 'downloads'.

Secondary schools continue to think of new ways to use Pendarren House – we recently had a successful maths group from Hornsey School - and D of E expeditions have proved popular.

Bookings for 2013-14 – availability on website. Forms for 13-14 on website [www.pendarren.org](http://www.pendarren.org)

This year we have a few groups who are bringing the maximum the House can cope with i.e.39 students. This week we had to lay on two coaches to bring everyone to Pendarren. If you would like to bring more students please contact Pendarren to see if it is possible.



We also have a number of Year 5 groups and a few schools who are sending whole year groups.

## Parents' Evenings

If you are planning a parents' evening and would like some annotated photographs of Pendarren House, the gardens and the activity venues then we have a link to Dropbox where you can download the photographs and use them as a slide show or incorporate them into your own presentation. Please contact Pendarren for the Dropbox link.

## OTHER

Pendarren ran a successful training course for instructors working towards the **Single Pitch Award** (an award for climbing instructors). Pendarren runs a few courses each year for adults and instructors wanting to train or be assessed for the nationally recognised leader qualifications in climbing, caving and canoeing.

## Hay Festival of Literature

Any listeners of the Radio 2 Breakfast Show with Chris Evans will have heard recently of the 500 words short story competition which he champions each year. How many of you will also have realised that the Hay Literary Festival (from where Chris broadcasts the results) is held in Hay on Wye – a mere 20 something miles from Pendarren House?

The Hay Festival is a fantastic opportunity for aspiring young writers to show their talent. It is also an opportunity for everyone to meet their favourite writer in a beautiful rural setting on the Welsh-English border.

The festival is held each year over the May / June half term break. The Firs at Pendarren is an ideal location for anyone wanting accommodation within easy driving distance of Hay on Wye.

If you have a particularly talented class of writers, why not consider bringing them to Pendarren for a week of outdoor activities to include a day visit to the festival? A variety of workshops and sessions with famous authors are available across the week.

For more information, visit the Hay Festival website at [www.hayfestival.com](http://www.hayfestival.com)



**And lastly .....**

### From an Ex Haringey teacher

I left Haringey nearly eleven years ago to work in a non-maintained special school in Essex. During the period from 1991 to 2002 I calculate I visited Pendarren eight times, so this was to be my ninth visit – this time with special needs 16 to 19 year olds rather than lively Year 5 and 6 pupils!

It was quite obvious from the website that essentially Pendarren was just the same as it always was: indeed, that it is why it is so successful. They have systems and

programmes that have worked over the years as well as excellent staff who contribute so much to the overall experience. The routines (e.g. the bedroom inspection and mealtime arrangements) were especially well suited to our autistic pupils.

So what has changed since 1991? There are new faces, but there is continuity with the staff and in over 40 years there have only been three heads of centre! Looking back at some old photos, there have of course been some changes: the climbing frame is no longer in the garden, but in place there is the low ropes course. The staff bathroom now has a shower instead of a bath and there has obviously been refurbishment, the classrooms now having carpet instead of a concrete floor! Also, *The Firs* is a fantastic acquisition and they have caught up with the 21<sup>st</sup> century with whiteboards, WiFi...and a mobile phone signal! A very endearing constant with Pendarren is the smells – the best being the home cooked food and baking... the least pleasant the morning-after smell in the drying room!

Fantastic memories... and another great week and thoroughly suited to our pupils.

*J Keith*

