



## PENDARREN HOUSE NEWSLETTER

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

No. 13      October 2013

### News

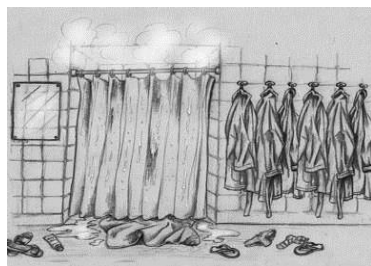
#### Salmon Jump

This September and October have been very warm with no sign of any snow on the mountain tops yet. However, we know autumn is approaching as one of the first signs is the migration of the salmonids, who were first spotted at Grwyne weir below Pendarren on the 2nd October. This year the salmon and sea trout run lasted for a few weeks as the fish waited for the water level at the weir to be at the right height in order for them to swim or leap past it. The local rivers are well known for their salmon and trout. The Gwyne, which runs past Pendarren, is popular with sea trout, many of whom migrate up the river at night and so may not be spotted.



#### Heating and Plumbing Works

Work is currently in progress to improve the heating at Pendarren. The Annexe now has new radiators in time for winter - the difference this has made will be obvious to those with experience of staying in the Annexe. The students' showers have also had an overhaul with new heads and thermostats to control the temperature. Work on the House will continue over the winter period and will include upgrading radiators and replacing the thermostats in the students' showers. We have also started to replace duvets and pillows in the dormitories.



#### Pendarren Orchard

The trees in the Pendarren grounds look beautiful in the autumn sunlight as they shed their red, orange and yellow leaves. Some of these trees were once part of a large orchard and we have an old plan of the orchard dated 1947. It includes many traditional varieties of apples and a few plum and pear trees. We have three apple trees left which an expert identified as Newton Wonder, Johnagold and Suntan. Many of the apples will be used in the pies or crumbles you will be served for dessert.



#### Woodland Trust Trees

We have just taken delivery of more trees donated by the Woodland Trust - so if you are visiting in November we may ask you to help plant them. Some of the more mature trees in the grounds need to be felled for safety reasons and so we are replanting to maintain the biodiversity of Pendarren.



#### Thanks to ...

Imperial College Caving Club, who kindly donated some caving lights to Pendarren House. We have been increasing our stock of equipment so that we are able to cope with larger groups, such as those who recently visited from Northumberland Park Community School. The equipment is expensive and so any donations like this are very welcome.



**Weston Park Primary School**  
**2-6 September 2013**

The first school of the new term arrived at Pendarren on a warm and sunny day. The summer weather continued all week, evidence being the sight of the Pendarren instructors in shorts.

A grey seal was spotted in the sea off Caswell Bay during the coastal visit. As the sun continued to shine, the pupils of Weston Park Primary decided that instead of sunning themselves, they would cool down by putting on their swimming costumes and splashing in the sea like the seal.

The sun shone on the river study visit as well. This time everyone cooled off by standing in the waterfalls.

A final opportunity to get wet was taken during a canoe session on the local canal when many pupils found that somehow they fell in or their canoe capsized.



**Highgate Primary School**  
**9-13 September 2013**

Highgate Primary School's Year 6 pupils stayed for a great week in good weather. The children were challenged using our local environment. From studying the local history underground at Big Pit; flying high on the ropes at Pendarren; surviving bushcraft skills; paddling down the Brecon and Monmouthshire canal; catching a few rays and crabs down at the Gower beaches to sliding down waterfalls and ascending the streams in Blaen y Glyn.

It was lovely to see the school returning to Pendarren and we look forward to seeing them next year.



**Rokesly Junior School**  
**16-20 September 2013**

Being in Pendarren is so fun because you're doing the best activities with all your friends and it builds life memories that you can only get in Pendarren. – Joe

The best thing about Pendarren is being with your friends because you learn how to be a team and you also get to know people you didn't know. I've learnt about people that I don't talk to. Pendarren is a great place to get responsibility for example making fire in the woods. – Anon

Pendarren teaches you new and exciting facts. It also teaches you independence. This experience can help children's confidence rise. – Amaan

Pendarren is a great place to come and learn responsibility, whilst having FUN. It also enables you to be more independent and grow up a little. All the activities are great, my favourite was BUSHCRAFT; being in the wild is my favourite thing. – Sibylla



**Lancasterian Primary School**  
**16-20 September 2013**

Dear Pendarren Staff

I just want to say a big thank you to all Pendarren Staff for making this happen and to Tori and Jennifer for coming with us. I've really enjoyed myself – it's been amazing staying here and it's been super fun. I really love all the adventures and learning new interesting things. I would really love to come again in secondary. I'm going to give Pendarren 5 stars. Thanks a lot.

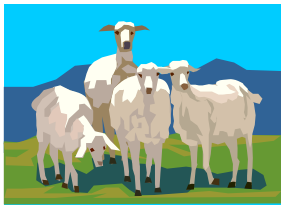
Form Tiarna xx

Thank you Pendarren staff for teaching me how to rock climb and I am so grateful for all

the stuff that you taught me because it only comes once in a lifetime.  
Thank you from Yasmine.

Thank you Pendarren for giving me this amazing experience. My favourite activity so far has been high ropes. The crates were fantastic. When they toppled over, I held onto my friend Jessica's legs. The mountain walk was really tiring but at least now I can say I walked up a mountain, saw millions of sheep and drank from a stream. Sierra.

Thank you Pendarren Staff for helping me make new friends and letting me come on the trips! I will never forget this once in a lifetime opportunity. Thanks a lot. Lots of love Shenai  
xxx



### **Crowland Primary School 23-27 September 2013**

The Welsh September sun shone bright as the children of Crowland Primary School arrived at Pendarren. A quick tour, some lunch and a dishing out of waterproofs was followed by an exploration of the local area, some fun, games and challenges to get everyone in the right mood. Tuesday was seaside day and even with the tide against us, the students were very enthusiastic in the rock pools where many creatures were acquired and studied before being returned to the sea. The rest of the week included the river study day (with caving trip), high ropes, canoeing and a walk around the local town of Crickhowell.



### **Ferry Lane Primary School 23-27 September 2013**

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2013

Dear Diary,

Today the sound of that bell wasn't too loud (phew!) and we were all ready for it. All the girls in the dorm woke up before the bell rang and had their fingers in their ears so it wasn't too loud.

We were told that today was the coastal walk along the beach! First we had to climb up to get to the bay up the path. There were so many cute dogs that we stroked all different breeds. When we got to the beach, we put on our wellies and did whatever we felt like. We could play football or sculptures. Before we did all that we ate lunch. After time was up, we went rock-pooling we had to find as many creatures as we could. Me and Amy M were partners and found two adult shrimps and some baby shrimps. We also found a type of snail creature which was white. There was a variety of what people found, from little shrimps to starfish! They were all alive and we got to look at them and touch some.

When we finished rock-pooling, we got changed into our swimming suits. We had permission to go in the sea. It was freezing! The waves were big and crashing, and there was seaweed all over the seabed. It wasn't the greatest experience but I still enjoyed it. Then we had to go back on the long tiring coach journey.

Amy T



**Mulberry Primary School**  
**30 September - 4 October 2013**

The things that I've seen are so wonderful and colourful.

The things I have seen are so interesting and made me want to do more.

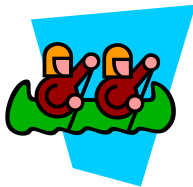
The things I have seen are fantastic and fun.

The things I have seen are pretty and were quite delicate.

In Pendarren we learnt how to ride a canoe and learnt how to work as a team. Fantastically we had done high ropes, where you had to stand on baskets to pass last year's record. The best experience ever.

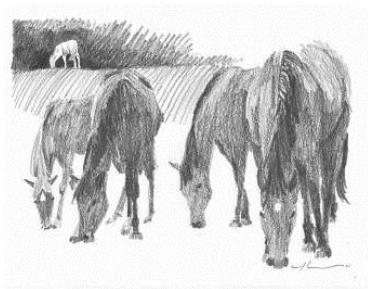
The activities are fun.  
The beds are cosy.

Live in a BIG house.  
Learn how to survive in the wilderness.



**Welbourne Primary School**  
**30 September - 4 October 2013**

The local horses (which have unusual names) are learning quickly that the little people in red coats will supply them with this year's crop of Pendarren apples - and they might even get a stroke out of it too! For some of the children this was the first time they had ever come face to face with an animal bigger than them. The experience was perfectly timed as the next day the groups were horse riding and had overcome their initial nervousness. The rest of the week saw the students engaged in the river study day, canoeing, adventure journey and bushcraft.



**Earlsmead Primary School**  
**7-11 October 2013**

Pupils and staff from Earlsmead Primary School had a brilliant week at Pendarren when they visited in October.

The most exciting part was Big Pit. I loved it because you get to experience what it was like for the miners underground. The explosions (not real) were awesome. Lovey

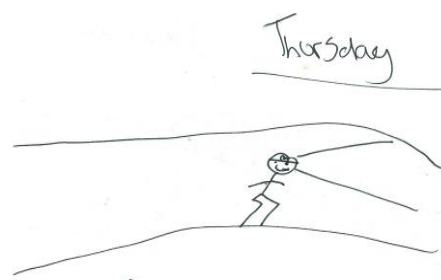
My most exciting part was when we went caving. It was really exciting because we went through these really tight tunnels, and these really shallow rivers. Then we washed in the waterfall. Arnold

My most exciting part was when we went into the cave and studied the different rocks in the water. The funny part was when I had to crawl through a hole and my boots got filled with water. Summer



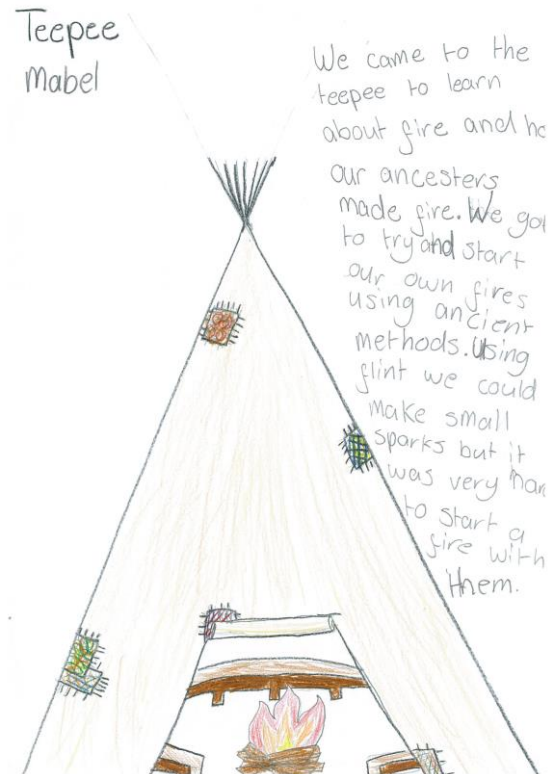
**Chestnuts Primary School**  
**14-18 October 2013**

Thursday I did river studying, we went inside the cave of Afon Mellte and we got soaked. I was extremely wet there was water all over the cave. The next bit we did was a waterfall. There was a place on the waterfall where we could slide - we were all soaking wet. My feet were cold as I had loads of water in my wellies. It was great - the best ever!



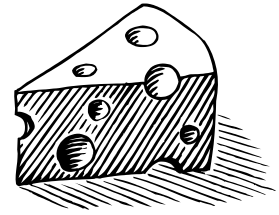


Thank you also for the comments left by the school regarding the differences between Pendarren House and our more commercial competitors. It was noted that the commercial providers do not compare with the educational aspects of Pendarren House, suggesting the commercial providers offer 'just physical pursuits that could be delivered in a sports centre'. Visitors to Pendarren often comment on the educational benefits of their trips and the value of real environments over more sterile, artificial and managed activity sites.

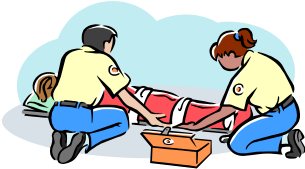


## Big Pit Mining Museum branches out ...

Viewers of the BBC Countryfile programme may have recently seen a feature on Big Pit. Matt Baker was investigating how conditions have been found to be perfect for maturing cheese underground at the mining museum. The cheese, a type of Cheddar, is available at Big Pit and at retailers local to Pendarren House.



## The Firs



Many users of the Firs are return visitors, but each year we get a new group of people who discover it. This year it was the British Mountaineering Council who used it as base to run a first aid course. The provider was impressed and his recommendations have resulted in other bookings for the Firs. Similarly, Chichester Canoe Club members came at the beginning of the year to try out the local rivers and are returning this autumn. The Firs is an ideal base for many activities in the area.

## The Friends of Pendarren

The Friends have recently purchased a new stereo to go in the Cellar of the Main House. The Cellar is often used as the location for a disco on the last night of a visit to Pendarren and the old stereo, being technologically challenged, was struggling with the digital trend. The new stereo will accept music on USB sticks and phones.



## Duke of Edinburgh Award



Following some restructuring of the Duke of Edinburgh Award in Haringey, Pendarren House now has its own AAP (Approved Activity Provider) licence. We are receiving a number of requests for open courses and hope to be putting on some expedition and residential courses next year. Keep an eye on the website for details.

## Events and Festivals

Cycling: The Tour of Britain came through the Brecon Beacons again this year and the locals got to see the likes of Bradley Wiggins who went on to win. In 2014 the Tour de France starts in Yorkshire before moving over to France, although it will be passing nearer to Haringey than Pendarren.



The Brecon Beacon Star Party took place this summer at Cwmdru, not far from Pendarren. The event, hosted by the Baker Street Irregular Astronomers, gave people the opportunity to check out telescopes, ask advice and enjoy the dark skies in the area.

The nearby Glanusk Estate hosted the 2013 Tough Mudder event for the south-west of Britain. In the words of the organisers, "Tough Mudder® events are hardcore 10-12 mile obstacle courses designed by Special Forces to test your all around strength, stamina, determination, and camaraderie." Visit their website [www.toughmudder.co.uk](http://www.toughmudder.co.uk) for more information.



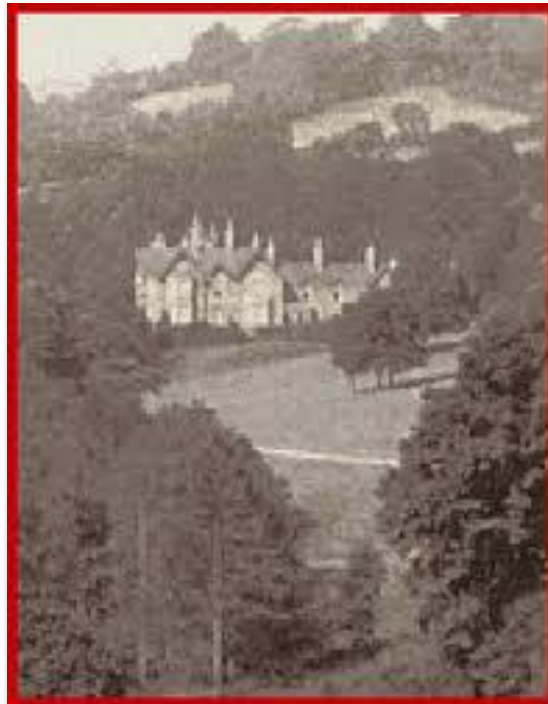



### And finally .....


Those of you who visited Pendarren at the end of the last school year would have been aware of the fact that Alex, our female instructor, was expecting a baby. Working right up until the last minute, she started her maternity leave just two weeks before the baby was due. The baby, a little girl named Charlotte, arrived just over a week late. Mother, father (Jamie, one of our relief instructors, who will also be known to many of you) and baby are all doing well.

### The Butler's Teaser


Can anybody tell us - what is the connection between Dickens and Pendarren House?



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