



PENDARREN HOUSE NEWSLETTER

www.pendarren.org

No. 14 January 2014

News

Heating systems

Those of you coming in winter will be pleased to hear that the central heating systems in the Main House and the Greig Annexe have been upgraded and everywhere is now warm. This work is nearly completed.

Showers

The students showers now have reliable thermostats, new heads and those in the Annexe are now under mains pressure. This should result in cleaner students!



Work in progress

There are some improvements we are still working on such as a second dehumidifier in the drying room, extractor fans in the Annexe dormitories and a new shower for the staff in the Annexe.

Some trees have been felled for safety reasons. We now have plenty of wood for shelter building and when the ground is dry we will be moving the tree trunks around the grounds to create seating areas. Some dead wood and trunks will be left for the little bugs to live in, and for those that feed on them such as spotted woodpeckers.



Camping

We now have a stock of camping equipment which will be used this summer, and is available to students when we run DofE expedition courses. This also opens up the opportunity for students spend a night in a tent in the grounds.

Booking applications for 2014/2015

Invitations to apply for a booking at Pendarren House in the 2014/2015 academic year have been emailed out to schools. If you haven't received your booking form, please contact us either by phone or email (details at the end of the newsletter) and one can be sent out. We hope to be able to inform all schools of their allocation(s) for the coming school year before the Easter break.

Tree Planting

Pendarren took another delivery of trees from the Woodland Trust in November and employed the services of visiting students to help plant them in the grounds. This brings the total number of trees planted during to 2013 to nearly 800.



New Curriculum

Pendarren has been reviewing the new primary curriculum and you will see some new activity options appearing on the Option Choice Form in the coming months. Thanks to Miss Cansdale of Mulberry Primary School for assisting with the review.

VISITORS

St Aidan's VC Primary School 4 to 8 November 2013

When I came to Pendarren I faced a few challenges I didn't think I would overcome. I didn't enjoy the thought of the caves or being away from my family and staying in a completely new area and building. It frightened me to think that for five days I would be doing a whole new daily routine. But when I got there I realised that I wasn't the only person to get homesick or frightened and I knew I had my teachers to help and look after me. I have had a great few days and Pendarren felt really homely. Pendarren has helped me feel more confident in new things and surroundings.

Grace, Year 6

There are things I did this week I never thought I could do in my lifetime. I did caving, high ropes, map making and canoeing but the most challenging one for me was mountain climbing. This was the very first time I walked up and down a mountain. Before I started I thought we were going to walk around but I thought wrong. When we started walking I was OK, but after 10 or 15 minutes I was exhausted. When we got to the top of the mountain the view was amazing, more than amazing- breathtaking. Sadly, I didn't know what was coming next because we had to go down the mountain. I was so scared of coming down the steep mountain I had tears coming down my face. Thankfully, our trainer helped me through and at the end I was so proud of myself. My name means waterfall and at Pendarren I saw a waterfall for the first time.

Rushaya, Year 6



Trinity Primary Academy

11 to 15 November 2013

Trinity started their week by planting some new trees, which had been donated by the Woodland Trust, in the Pendarren grounds.

Pendarren is a flabbergasting place to try out new things and participate in life changing activities. This has been the best experience I'd ever had! You learn and discover interesting facts, you get taught to survive outdoors as well as other useful skills such as how to make a fire. – Jessica

I stayed in Pendarren for a week and it was great! The food is scrumptious and the activities like high ropes are interesting and help you conquer your fears. – Anastasia

I think I have had loads of fun at the Pendarren House and the staff really do teach you how to do the activities well. I have reached my goals I set at the beginning of the week. – Merita



Bruce Grove Primary School 11 to 15 November 2013

As the leaves fall from the trees here in Wales the autumn colours of red, gold and brown carpet the ground making the scenery particularly stunning.

My biggest achievement was rock-climbing because I am afraid of heights. – Napoli

The most important thing I learned at Pendarren is not to give up. – Barbara

My favourite memory was discovering different creatures in rock pools - Hassan

I enjoyed climbing and abseiling the most because I was first scared but then I done it. – Batuhan

The most important thing for me was learning how to trust other people and respect for others. – Ezel

Chichester Canoe Club
14 to 16 November 2013

Members of the Chichester Canoe Club used The Firs as their base during a weekend visit to Wales to paddle the River Usk. One group of paddlers were coached and guided down a grade 2/3 section of the river by Pendarren staff whilst the remainder of the group paddled other sections in a peer led group. At the end of their stay, they were asked if they would give some feedback about the weekend. They gave a very neat reply: 'Been before – will come again'.

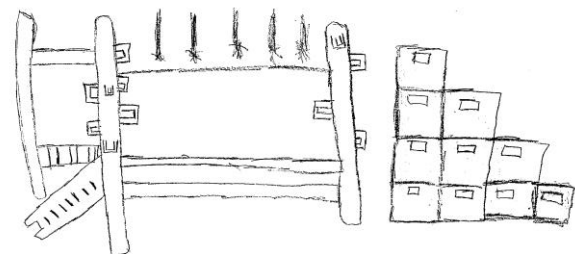
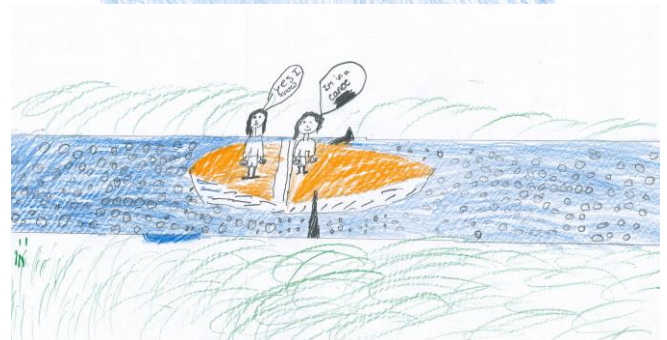


Alexandra Primary School
18 to 22 November 2013

*First snow arrives on the Cambrian mountains
Pendarren 2013*

I'm in Pendarren like I live here,
I got mucky and I have no fear.
Planted trees, went through a waterfall
And I think Pendarren is really cool
Got a bruise,
I don't even care
Miss Greaves started taking photos
Climbed up walls
As Mr Gilleran smiled
Took photos and posed in style!
And I am tired, really tired
Can't you see I'm closing my eyes
So wake me up when it's all over
When I'm less tired and I'm older
All this week I've found myself
And I didn't know I was lost!

Greta, Theresa and Eliza



High rope!

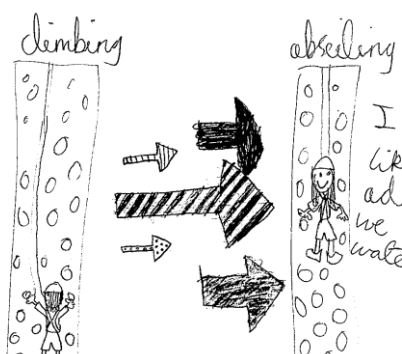
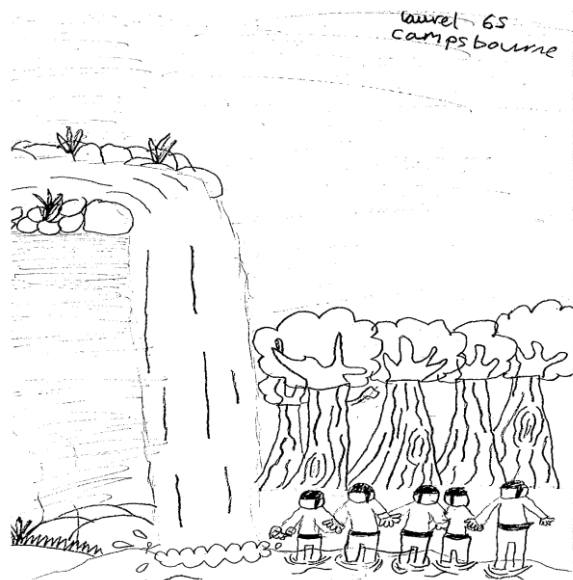
Campsbourne School
25 to 29 November 2013

I really liked abseiling because it was fun and I gained my confidence.

Amazingly this exhilarating trip rapidly built my confidence and helped me be stronger in the arms. Before I was a timid girl who just did sport but resentedly. I have become strong and helpful to others. The best and most fun was standing under a towering monumental waterfall!

I loved it because it was fun and exciting. It also improved my skill of being brave and trying new things. I enjoyed Pendarren

because they had delicious food and pudding. Never the less when I walked in the room Pen-y-Fan it was very nice especially when I got to go to bed. The adventure journey and the activities were very exciting but I liked canoeing and rock climbing the most!



St Francis de Sales Junior School 2 to 6 December 2013

The pupils of St Francis de Sales Junior School spent the Wednesday evening of their visit learning about Emergency First Aid using the British Heart Foundations' Heartstart Course. They learnt how to respond to unconscious casualties as well as how to perform CPR and rescue breaths.

"It was a really exciting moment for Year 6 because not only did we get a chance to learn something new but we could help lots of lives. We had to do CPR – we had to push on a mannikin's chest. It was really interesting because we didn't know what to do at first but in the end we understood. We also watched a little clip which helped us understand".
Venora & Melissa



St John Vianney Primary School 9 to 13 December 2013

After much discussion, the pupils of St John Vianney Primary School came up with the following Top Tips for anybody coming to Pendarren in the future:

- Eat plenty of food so that you have enough energy!
- Beware the tree of doom on adventure walk.
- Pack everything that is on your packing list.
- Listen to instructions and wear the right clothes.
- Layer your clothes to keep warm.
- Follow instructions.
- Try all the activities.
- Be neat and tidy in your dormitory.
- Go to sleep when you're told to.
- Check you have the right things before you go to the shower room.
- Have fun, sleep well, eat well, listen well, behave well.
- Don't lose your temper, calm down and sort it out.
- Keep calm, even if you're scared.
- Support people when they're nervous.

- Encourage each other.
- Different people are scared of different things and need your help.
- Prepare for dormitory inspection- they're very fussy!
- Stay focused on what you're doing and don't get distracted.



Bancrofts School Rugby Tour 13 to 15 December 2013

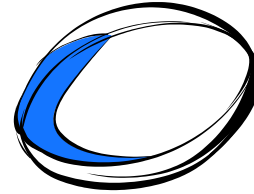
Bancrofts school returned for the second year to undertake a rugby tour of Wales, competing against local clubs. Below is part of their report:

As you would have thought, Welsh schools are probably very good at rugby because that is their one main sport. The squad didn't think about this, they just played their best and didn't give up. They also have different rules to us, so we were going to have to adapt very quickly. It was a very tough match which did finish in a loss with the score at 31-24 to them, but we were all pleased with how we played. Once we dried up and had a little something to eat, we thanked their coach and the ref, and we were off again to the next destination. The place we would be staying. Pendarren House.

Once the dorms had been sorted, we went upstairs to the rooms, which were really nice with bunk beds and an amazing view of the sheep outside! After dinner, we got ready for late night orienteering! We climbed in the coaches, and headed off to the forest. We all took a map and we had to find fifteen poles with stamps that we had to press into the answer sheet to show we had been there. It was so scary. It was pitch black and we had to go in two's. It didn't help that Mr Faiers, Mr Greenidge and Mr Argyle were hiding behind every corner waiting to jump out at us! That night I think we all slept with one eye open! We all came back alive, but we were scarred for life!

The next morning we tried the High Ropes course. There was Jacob's Ladder, Leap of Faith

and Climbing Wall Gladiators. In Jacob's Ladder, you had to work as a team to get to the top of a massive ladder. It didn't help that the platforms increased in size as you got higher! After this amazing morning, we got on the coach again and set off to the Scarlets' stadium, to watch Scarlets vs Clermont in the Heineken Cup. Then our coaches gave us another surprise. We would be parading around the pitch!



Bounds Green School 16 to 20 December 2013

Bounds Green School were at Pendarren for the final week of term with a group of Year 6 children. They had a great week with the weather staying warm and Santa arriving for a big Christmas dinner on Thursday evening.

I liked the activities they were challenging but still fun. I learnt how to deal with challenging social situations. - Edward

I loved the Pendarren experience! The rooms were really nice and it was really fun sleeping with my friends! I have done loads of things that I have never done before. Pendarren has made me experience things that I would never have done otherwise. - Lottie



Duke of Edinburgh

As a Duke of Edinburgh Approved Activity Provider (AAP), Pendarren House can offer training, practice expeditions and qualifying expeditions for the bronze, silver and gold award in walking and canoeing.

If your school is interested we have availability in the Easter holiday, April 4-11 2014.

Pendarren House recently played host to a group of Duke of Edinburgh Young Leaders who came for a residential training course.



New Walking Leader Award

If you lead groups on field study trips, DofE, scouts, guides etc then you may be interested in a new award from the Mountain Training Board (MTB). It is to be called the Lowland Leader Award. The MTB awards are recognised throughout Britain, see www.mountain-training.org for more details.

Pendarren House is a provider for this new Lowland Leader Award which will be launched in April 2014. Pendarren House can also offer the Hill and Moorland Leader Award (previously known as the Walking Group Leader), Mountain Leader Award, Single Pitch Award and Climbing Wall Award.

If you are interested in any of these courses as they can be organised according to demand.



Friends of Pendarren

The Friends of Pendarren continue to support storyteller Daniel Morden. This means we can charge a flat rate instead of having to charge small groups more, the Friends make up the difference. Daniel's books are available in Big Green Book Shop, Wood Green; Daniel was recently spotted in there too!



Of course he told a tale and signed copies of his books. Thanks to all the children (and teachers!) who came along to listen and get a signed copy. Daniel does travel to London and is available to visit schools.

Projects the Friends are also funding are: disco lights to replace those in the cellar / tuckshop; taller tree tubes to keep the sheep off them; a visualiser – for example to enlarge little creatures and display their image on a large screen.



Pendarren House 40th birthday

In summer 2015 it will be 40 years since Haringey held the official opening of Pendarren House Outdoor Education Centre. The Friends are organising a celebration of this event and are looking for anyone who is willing to help. We will be finalising a date in the coming months.



Comments from Visiting Staff

In recent editions, our newsletter has included comments and quotes from visiting pupils and groups to give a flavour of their experiences. We often get comments from visiting staff as well, which are shared here.

Like our Year 6 class, I have just returned from my first trip to Pendarren. Having visited other similar centres with other schools, I was impressed by the holistic care offered by the staff who supported our pupils throughout mealtimes and for some evening activities as well as during the more adventurous activities.

Our pupils excelled themselves by challenging themselves throughout the week in a variety

of ways. Whether it was putting a duvet cover on for the first time, walking through a fast flowing river or coping with being away from home, they all demonstrated the 'Pendarren spirit.' Parents have already commented on the increased maturity and confidence they have seen in their children since their return.

Headteacher, St Aidan's VC Primary School

'Pendarren staff – teachers and instructors have a very cohesive approach. At Pendarren a 'can do, will do if possible' ethos is evident. I like the fact that some activities allow for children to really challenge themselves by taking part in very scary tasks, knowing there is some risk but that all risks have been considered. It is also good that staff quickly get to know children and know who needs that extra encouragement but also know when to stop. The activities were varied with strong support for the primary curriculum. Incidental learning opportunities were taken such as the development of the canal. Staff are always helpful, considerate and smiling (very good approach for school staff with lots to do and remember). The support staff always responded positively to requests for milk, ice packs etc. The house is clean and cosily warm even at night (I didn't use my hot water bottle!) and plenty of hot water. Thank you for making the effort to learn children's names, it personalises everything.'

Headteacher, St John Vianney Primary School

Returning to Pendarren has been a delightful experience! As a child you are thrown into a new world full of exciting, adventurous independence. As an adult you are filled with a sense of pride and astonishment at the personal achievements of all the children in your care. The staff's knowledge and understanding is inspirational to say the least. I hope to return many more times to experience the wonders and joys of Pendarren.

Teacher, Bounds Green School

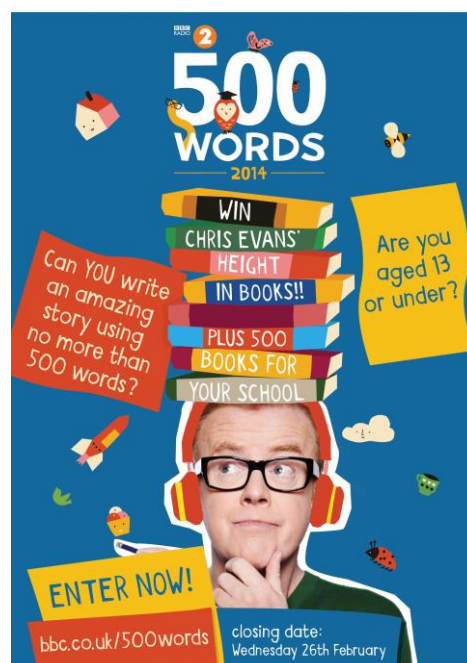
Children in Need

As many of you will know, Alex Jones of BBC's "The One Show" cycled around parts of Britain on a rickshaw to raise money for Children in Need. One of the legs brought her through nearby Crickhowell and in to Abergavenny, where she broadcast to the nation.




500 Word Short Story Competition


Alex Jones also features as the First Lady of Chris Evans / Radio 2's 500 word short story competition. This competition, for children aged 13 or under, is run in conjunction with the Hay Literary Festival – which is held annually in Hay on Wye, just 30 miles from Pendarren. Why not enter the competition? You could write a story based on your experiences at Pendarren and find yourself returning to the area if you're a winner!




And finally, from Newsletter 13, Pendarren and Charles Dickens

John Andrew Doyle built Pendarren House in 1874. He inherited so much money from his grandfather, Sir John Easthope, that he did not have to work. Sir John was the owner of a newspaper, the Morning Chronicle. In 1834 he took on a promising young journalist to try to improve sales in the fight against a rival newspaper, the Times. The journalist was Charles Dickens who proved to be very quick and capable at his job. Sir John was a difficult man to work for and Charles organised a strike to complain about working conditions. Charles earned 5 guineas a week (£5.25), and as well as being a journalist he wrote some short stories for the newspaper under the pseudonym Bos. He left the newspaper in 1836 before going on to become one of Britain's most famous authors.

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