



## PENDARREN HOUSE NEWSLETTER

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

No. 9 February 2013

### News

The anticipated snow finally arrived on Friday 18 January 2013. Red warnings from the weather forecasters on Thursday were correct as, overnight, South Wales was carpeted in thick snow and over the following week 40-50 cm fell. There was very little wind so the snow was piled high on branches and telegraph wires. Two primary schools were in residence at Pendarren at the time of the snow – both had to get up very early on Friday morning in order to travel safely back to Haringey. Read the news from our visiting schools to see if you can work out which schools they were!



The snow around Pendarren melted after a week and all returned to normal. The snowdrops are out now, heralding the arrival of spring, and there are a few lambs to be seen in the fields. There has been some very heavy rain which, fortunately, has not caused flooding in the area but it does mean that the rivers are high. The instructors have been out in their spare time enjoying some exciting canoe sessions.

The scaffolding around the Main House has finally been taken down after 8 months. A number of draughty windows and leaks have been cured and all the external woodwork has been repainted. The Centre looks very smart in time for spring.



After Christmas BT disconnected one of our phone lines by mistake which left us without our fax and our usual @pendarren.org emails for a whole month. Without access to our office network of emails, it meant some inventive movement of files to our Haringey email system. This resulted in the Booking Applications for the 2013/2014 academic year being sent out a little later than planned. Hopefully no one was inconvenienced too much.

The closing date for the booking applications has passed and the response has been terrific. We are working hard to ensure that every school that has applied will get a week of their choosing. Thank you to everyone for continuing to support Pendarren House and the Pendarren Experience.

## SECONDARY SCHOOLS – HOW CAN YOU USE PENDARREN?



We have produced a new secondary booklet (available to download from our website) that sets out in more detail how secondary schools can use us – it summarises aspects of the various syllabi that we can deliver at Pendarren: GCSE, BTEC and A Level PE, Geography, Science, Leisure and Tourism. Students can leave Pendarren with modules or marks towards their examinations. A 5 day course equates to around 40 hours teacher/student contact time and the student can focus on one activity.

We have witnessed over the last year that, due to increasing pressures in schools, many secondary schools struggle to send groups of students for Monday to Friday residential visits. As a consequence, we have taken bookings for shorter courses with more specific aims and objectives. Examples have been weekend visits as a “reward” for recognition of hard work; two night mid-week visits for targeted maths work; and, as you read earlier, two night visits for A2 Level Geography students studying specific areas of the curriculum.



The Pendarren staff are keen to ensure that work with secondary groups remains embedded in the ethos of the Pendarren Experience and, to this end, would welcome any applications for alternative secondary group visits. As well as working with achieving students, Pendarren can offer courses for those students who underachieve for a variety of reasons, including social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. In many cases an intense, short stay residential experience is beneficial for the student and the school.

If you have a group who would benefit from a visit to Pendarren and who would not fit in with the normal Monday to Friday programme, please get in touch. We would like to discuss any alternative ways of accommodating your group.



***If you still have doubts, please take time to read the following message from Ms Henning (Humanities Department) and Mr Atherton (Headteacher) at Park View:***

### What can Pendarren offer secondary students?

“Pendarren offers an opportunity for students in Haringey to go on a journey of self discovery. It allows them to develop self belief and it gives them a degree of escapism to build ambition and set realistic life aims. It enables the growth of new and old friendships and with this it infuses confidence. Coupled with challenging activities set in a contrasting environment, this unique educational facility provokes development in levels of commitment and resilience but also exponentially enhances students’ ability to work as a team, as well as develop key leadership qualities.

Pendarren hosts a breadth of experienced and compassionate staff. The set up in itself is diverse and flexible to accommodate a range of students and objectives. This ensures bespoke programmes to be devised and delivered with striking impact and maximum outcome. Pendarren is at the heart of education, the development of the whole child. The amount of progress each individual makes regarding their personal social development during every trip to Pendarren has been astounding, which I believe could never be achieved in the classroom.

When I started researching possible residential trips, it became clear that Pendarren was the only affordable option which delivered such an exceptionally high standard of educational program. We are indebted and grateful to have the opportunity to take our students to Pendarren. Without this opportunity I feel students in Haringey will fail to have the opportunity to immerse themselves in a situation which encourages growth and development of crucial key skills to enable them to connect and succeed in their community of tomorrow.”

#### **Some quotes from students:**

*‘When you live in Tottenham, you have a limited vision, Pendarren opens your eyes to something life changing’*  
**Nicola**

*‘I only said ‘I can’t’ 18 times today - that’s so much better than the 201 times yesterday!’* **Sultan** the day after climbing Pen-Y-Fan

*‘You never know what you’re capable of until you try’* **Hannah**

## VISITORS COMMENTS:

### **Bounds Green Junior School 17-21 December 2012**

Bounds Green enjoyed the final week of term before Christmas here at Pendarren; they took part in some fantastic full day activities. On their first full day, they went canoeing and had a bushcraft lunch, whilst on another day they took part in an adventure walk at Blaen y Glyn - which took in the mountain tops, the woods, the 800 metre railway tunnel (with just one candle!) and an up close and personal (wet) look at the mountain streams.

Thursday night saw the traditional Pendarren Christmas dinner with a visit from a cheerful looking man in a big red suit!

The children left us some comments about their week at Pendarren and what it means to them:

"Some of the best times of my life. I loved the sun and adrenaline so much. Growing up is like a rollercoaster and Pendarren is one of the highs. Lots of amazing once in a lifetime views and experiences. I will never forget this week." - Eva

"In Pendarren I enjoyed climbing mountains and having a nice time with my friends. My favourite thing was having a disco and roast dinner, and I would advise people to go to Pendarren when they are in year six. The instructors are really helpful and it was good doing things I have never done before." - Athena



### **St Mary's Priory School 14-18 January 2013**

The children from St Mary's Priory had an exciting week. They excelled in all the activities

by overcoming problems with the weather using good humour, dressing well and being patient. The groups were able to follow their programme and the children's great spirit and ability to accept the challenges thrown at them were a credit to themselves, their staff and school. There were some good falls of snow on the mountains during the week and the snow made for some interesting river studies but they were able to get to the caves in order to study the limestone and the river carving through it. (This gave Sara a very exciting birthday). The staff and pupils were incredibly organised and very helpful on the Friday due to a red Meteorological Office weather warning of heavy snowfall on Friday. They were up and had left Pendarren by 3.40 am! They were back in Haringey by 7.30 am - which was great as by 12.30 pm, when the coach normally leaves, we had 15cm of snow in the car park!



### **The Green CE Primary School (now Holy Trinity CE Primary School) 14-18 January 2013**

The Green had a great week at Pendarren House. The pupils wrapped up warmly each day before embarking on their activities. A programmed mixture of education and adventure delivered 5 days of challenge, development and fun for the Year 6 group. Pupils sent back wonderful reports detailing their experiences. A few excerpts are duplicated here to give a flavour of the week:

#### Canoeing

"...We also had to wear a helmet and a lifejacket and a waterproof jacket and trousers. Then we went on a mini-bus to where the canoeing boats were, then I got on one. After we went on the boat I rowed with Kieron, Leatitia, Joseph, Anaih to the gigantic bridge then we had a race. My group won the race."....Prescilla

#### High Ropes

"...We also went high roping which was challenging fun and scary. At first we all got buckled up in our harnesses and helmets. Suddenly when the second set of people finished there was a sudden silence - it was me, Kion and Isus's turn to go and climb on

the tall orange crates. Pleased with myself I dangled and slowly got lowered down by my leader and then we all went down to the picnic benches and had a lovely tasty lunch.".....Kayahla

Heavy snowfall was forecast for the Friday morning return so an early start was decided upon. Morning bell at 02.45 am! Last bit of packing and a bit of breakfast and the bus left at 03.40am. The pupils were very organised and helpful and took the very early start in their stride. Had they left it any later, the bus would not have been able to reach Pendarren or Haringey!



### **South Haringay Junior School 21-25 January 2013**

South Haringay Junior School certainly experienced the fantastic snow that Wales has to offer. The activities carried on regardless (albeit a little modified and with lots of warm clothes) and the children had a great time learning about rivers, developing their teamwork skills on the high ropes and studying the sea creatures they had caught at the beach. To take the minibuses to Swansea for the coastal visit they first had to clear 25 cm of snow from their roofs! Alfred Wainwright once said "there is no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing". We definitely proved that correct this week. The children were wrapped up in many layers and with hats, gloves and scarves there was no stopping them even in the deepest snow! A great time was had by staff and students alike. One pupil wrote of his trip:

"Pendarren is a unique and exciting outdoor education centre. Its unconventional techniques enhance knowledge about our outside world. As well as the instructors teaching us about the great outdoors, the Pendarren experience offers a chance to learn more about ourselves and others! During activities we are encouraged to use social skills and teamwork to learn together. Amazingly Pendarren has introduced us to many new skills we did not know we had! Being able to stand and watch waterfalls and hold

crabs in our hands lets us see natural wonders up close! You wouldn't get that in a classroom..."

Kylan



### **Belmont Junior School 21-25 January 2013**

After a long coach journey, we finally arrived at Pendarren House to find it covered in snow. We unpacked and when for an exciting walk in the snow, in which everyone toppled over. On Tuesday morning we did a river study, which involved following the river Grwyne to its springs. In the

afternoon we split into two groups to do high ropes and rock climbing. Both of these activities were enjoyed immensely. One of the best

parts was the snow. We had a snow sculpture competition, where each team had to build a snow animal in ten minutes. We had

fish, squirrels, deer and owls. The fun continued on Thursday when we went for a coastal visit to Caswell Bay. We foraged in the rock pools for creatures. After lunch we played in the sand and toasted marshmallows. Pendarren was an unforgettable experience and was enjoyed by all.



### **Trinity Primary Academy 28 January – 1 February 2013**

When we got to the Pendarren house we had to look for squares of red and white or blue and white in the garden. And write the shape on the

paper. It was called orienteering I think. Climbing and abseiling was exciting. It made me feel my muscles. It was wet and windy. It got too rainy so we went indoors in the climbing room. It was dry. That was so good fun. We played musical climbing – when the music stopped you had to hold on to the grips really tight. I thought canoeing might be a scary but it wasn't. It felt a strange to start but you got used to it quickly and soon we were racing and played lots of fun games. I got splashed. There were ducks there. On adventure journey you walk and splash all along the stream. Sometimes you climb over trees, sometimes under trees. We stood under a waterfall. Would you believe that? It was the strongest shower you had ever, but no shampoo and hot water. It was the best. On the high ropes test you had to be responsible and very sensible and work like a football team but I laughed so much when the boxes fell down and you had to swing in the air tied to a strong rope. Then we balanced on beams and bridges and you looked down on your friends. I liked it high. Table Mountain was really windy on top. The sun was shining and the views were amazing the sky was bright blue. You could see Sugar Loaf, Blorenge and Pen Y Fan they are mountains. (The bedrooms are named after them). It was a bit tiring walking all the way to the top but it was brilliant. Then we built shelters with sticks and leaves - the bright green leaves made a soft carpet. We did a disco in the tuck shop. There was some good dancing and some bad dancing. Before we came back to London we saw a town in Wales called Abergavenny. We learnt about the history and saw the castle and sweetshop.



### **Alexandra Park School A2 Level Geography Trip 31 January – 2 February 2013**

Alexandra Park Sixth Form students came for a Thursday to Saturday fieldwork course, focussing on Cold Environments – Landscapes and Change, plus the World of Cultural Diversity. The students had a trip around Abergavenny, an ancient market town, and met up with local A Level students from King Henry VIII School for a discussion on cultural differences. The following day they climbed Pen y Fan looking at the relict landscape, shaped by the last glacial period 14 - 18,000 years ago, to get an understanding of how the physical process shaped our landscapes and how we now use them. The course was rounded off with an underground exploration on Saturday in Ogof Clogwyn, exploring the geology of the limestone of South Wales.

Here are a few comments from the students:

*'Hands on, practical experience.'*  
*'We got a real sense of achievement climbing to the top of the mountain!'*  
*'Excellent visual aid to our A2 theory.'*

This was all they were capable of in the mini-bus after caving! They were mostly asleep by the time they reached Abergavenny at the start of their homeward journey!



### **St Gilda's Catholic Junior School 4-8 February 2013**

The pupils of St Gilda's had such an amazing time at Pendarren that when they returned to school, they not only put together a presentation of their feelings about Pendarren but they wrote some fantastic thank you letters to the instructors. Here are just a few of the things they had to say:

I think it is important for children to visit Pendarren because I think that if I hadn't gone to Pendarren, then I wouldn't have changed as a person and I definitely wouldn't have learnt to value all my classmates more - because in Pendarren you see a different side to all of your friends, a side you've never seen and might never see again. Aoife

My favourite activity was the High Ropes. I enjoyed it because when the instructor knocked the stack of crates from beneath my feet I was left dangling and I felt like I was flying. I felt like I could leave everything behind me like my fear, which had rushed into me as soon as I got up high like a sharp needle. Christy

My favourite activity was honestly the caving. I thought it would be horrible. It was also my biggest achievement I have made because I always thought that when I had to do the Letter Box or crawl in small spaces that I would never do it in a million years, but I ended up having the best time of my life because Mr. Agutter- our Instructor- really did show it to me differently. Eimear

Pendarren has made me a better person by me trying new things - even though I might be scared. Jana

Pendarren has changed me into a better person because in the high ropes challenge it was all about having trust in your friends, because to have a better friendship you need to trust your friends. Mahlet



**Noel Park Primary School  
4-8 February 2013**

Some reflections from this week's visitors:

"The best part for me was the caving. I felt excited and proud that I did it. You should come it's a great experience and there is nice bacon!" - Raiquan

"I'd do it a thousand times if I could. The orienteering was fun because we had to work it out for ourselves. Don't forget to bring gloves and lots of thick socks!" - Jamie

"I felt really scared at the top of the high ropes, but then I got used to it. Just don't look down! I'd love to come again next year. - Imane

Teachers Comments:

"Noel Park Primary recognises the importance of our inner city kids coming to a place like Pendarren. The facilities, the instructors, the activities give the children a taste of challenge and a change of scenery from the everyday school life. It's my second time here and it's a brilliant experience. Thanks for everything, the staff here are second to none. - Ms O



**St Francis de Sales Junior School  
11-15 February 2013**

This was the first visit of the year for St Francis de Sales. A second group of pupils will come in June! During their visit, they attended Our Lady and St Michael's Church to celebrate the Ash Wednesday Mass. So how did this group feel about their time at Pendarren?

"It was lots of fun, in Pendarren, I don't have enough pieces of paper to write all the things that I have smelt, heard and felt." Bill

"Pendarren was such an amazing place. I never expected you could do so much stuff. I loved the activities such as high ropes, canoeing and horse riding. I conquered most of my fears by going to Pendarren." Rhianna

"My Pendarren experience was unforgettable. I remember when we first arrived and did orienteering; that was fun. As we came off the coach I saw the huge Pendarren House. At the

first time of entering the house I smelt the pizza. I felt excited and nervous because I was away from my family, but I got used to it. At night it is relaxing because if you wake up before the bell you hear the birds singing, that's lovely." Alison

"Pendarren Experience was the best thing that has happened in my school life. I really enjoyed it because it helped me conquer my fears. My favourite experience was when we went caving with Ms Young and we all got soaking wet. I was extremely happy as this was my first time caving and I would never forget the day. Another activity I really enjoyed was when we used the high ropes. That was when I was finally no longer afraid of heights. To sum up, Pendarren is a brilliant place to go and I would definitely recommend it."



## Work Experience

Two students from St Thomas More School did their work placements during the week that St Francis de Sales pupils were visiting. Here are their thoughts on the week.

*During my work experience I really learnt a lot about working in Pendarren and how the workers are. I learnt that it doesn't really matter how many times you tell the children what to do etc, you always have to explain it more than once! And I learnt that you're not here to be their best friend, you're here to work and help. – Sofia, Year 10, St Thomas More*

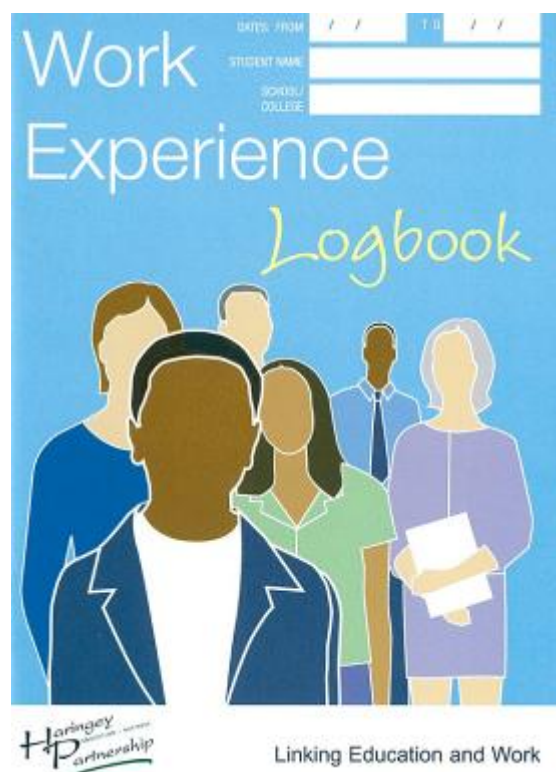
*In Pendarren I experienced how the life is for the people who work here. I also learnt how to control a small group of children and show leadership. This skill I could also use in later stages of my life. I have learnt how to speak words of encouragement to children who are finding it hard to do an activity so it may lift their spirits. – Leticia, Year 10, St. Thomas More School*

Pendarren work experience placements are organised through the Haringey Education Business Partnership. We try to offer as many work placements as we can throughout the school year, subject to there being suitable school groups to work with. If you think you would like to do your work experience placement at Pendarren, or if you have a student who would like to do so, please talk to your school work experience co-ordinator who should contact Haringey Education Business Partnership on 020 8352 5917.

We have accommodation for two students sharing a bedroom, so same sex pairs are welcomed. Transport can be arranged on our coach, travelling with the visiting schools, but this is subject to there being sufficient seats available. Alternatively, students can travel by train from Paddington to Abergavenny where we can arrange to collect from the station.

Students coming to Pendarren should be aware of the type of placement they will be carrying out. A placement will be a Monday to Friday residential and students will be expected to help out with all aspects of a residential visit – including helping the duty instructor with evening duties. Their placement will involve observing and aiding instructors to deliver an outdoor activity programme which may not involve taking part in the activities themselves. For students interested in careers in the outdoors or working with children, this placement can be invaluable.

If you have any questions about work experience at Pendarren, please contact us.



## Thanks

The Tottenham Grammar School Foundation have kindly offered us a generous grant, through the Somerset Grants, towards a second fleet of canoes. Canoeing is our most popular activity and when we are busy we are currently unable to offer it to all groups. This grant will allow us to offer more options to the primary groups, allow us to offer canoeing on a river to all secondary groups, and give us more flexibility with the programming. The Friends of Pendarren have also contributed towards this fleet of canoes.



We should also thank all the staff and pupils who have written to us. We receive hundreds of letters, pictures and comments from the groups who have visited Pendarren – so many that we cannot fit all the comments into this newsletter. Even though we can't mention everyone, please continue to send your letters to us. Your support is always gratefully received.

## Friends of Pendarren



The Friends of Pendarren have been busy purchasing and donating items for the students at Pendarren.

The CD duplicator we use to burn the CDs for the students had become temperamental. Increasing file sizes compounded our problems and so the Friends bought a DVD duplicator so we can now issue CDs or DVDs.

The Annexe now has a small library and stereo. The introduction of a library in both the House and Annexe has proved very popular with visiting students. If you should have any books which you think would be suitable for our library, and which you would be willing to donate, please contact us. We could arrange collection and / or delivery. Any genre would be welcome.



The Friends have bought Pendarren some large games such as giant chess, Twister and Jenga so that both the House and Annexe now have these resources.

Cameras continue to be replaced as they have a hard life following the groups on their activities.

Nic Hunt, the Headteacher at Weston Park Primary School, has generously given up his time to become the Treasurer of The Friends of Pendarren whilst Emma Cansdale, Assistant Headteacher at Mulberry Primary School, continues as the Secretary. Both Nic and Emma are enthusiastic supporters of the Pendarren Experience and their support is greatly appreciated by everyone at Pendarren. They act as ambassadors for us in the Borough – anybody wanting additional information about the work of The Friends of Pendarren may contact them.

## The Firs

The heavy snow at the end of January meant that one of the groups who had booked The Firs were unable to travel to Wales. Their booking was moved to an alternative weekend in March – and we're hoping that it doesn't snow again! The group concerned are keen members of a canoe club in the south of England and they will be paddling the white water of the rivers around Pendarren.



The Firs is an ideal base for enthusiasts who want to try out all the different activities available in the area. The bungalow is equipped with a large garage, including a drying room, and there is ample parking and storage space immediately around the bungalow. We have regular bookings from a walking group and a mountain bike group.

If you are a member of a group who would like to explore the South Wales countryside, contact us to see if The Firs would be a suitable base camp.





## Teachers – Need some promotional materials?

### Pendarren Photos

To help schools with parents' evenings we have a Dropbox link to lots of nice annotated pictures of Pendarren House - the rooms, the grounds, the venues and the activities. You can use the images as a slideshow, or incorporate them into a presentation or poster.

If you could make use of the photographs, please contact us and we will email you a Dropbox link.



### Video

We are working on producing a promotional video. If there are any students studying design or media who would like to create a promotional DVD, please get in touch. The project could be part of course work, and the experience added to a CV.

### Handbooks


Primary and Secondary Staff Handbooks are available to download from the Pendarren website. The handbooks explain what we can offer and how the activities link to the curriculum.

### Brochure

We have also produced an A4 brochure, contact Pendarren if you would like one.




*Pendarren House on the morning of January 18th 2013.*

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