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YSGOL GYMUNEDOL
CWMTAWE
COMMUNITY SCHOOL

PARENTS' NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2015

CYLCHLYTHYR RHINI

GWANWYN 2015

Dear Parents,

I am delighted to bring you our latest newsletter, packed with activities and events that pupils have been involved in across the school. The highlights in the newsletter give a flavour of the outstanding achievements and breadth of opportunities experienced over the last three months. I hope you enjoy reading it.

Annwyl Rieni,
Mae'n bleser gennyf gyflwyno ein cylchlythyr diweddaraf, yn llawn newyddion am y gweithgareddau y bu'r disgyblion yn cymryd rhan ynddynt ar draws yr ysgol. Hyderaf y bydd yr uchafbwyntiau yn y cylchlythyr yn rhoi blas i chi o lwyddiannau'r disgyblion ynghyd â'r rhychwant o gyfleoedd a brofwyd dros y tri mis diwethaf. Rwy'n gobeithio y byddwch yn mwynhau ei ddarllen.

Yours sincerely

Mr. C. L. Hitchings

HEADTEACHER / PRIFATHRO



ATTENDANCE PRESENOLDEB

School attendance currently stands at 93.7%.

This would not be possible without your support as parents/carers in ensuring your children attend regularly. It would also be appreciated if you could organise medical and dental appointments outside the school day whenever possible.

Good attendance has a direct impact on pupil achievements.



EXAMINATIONS ARHOLIADAU

It is essential that pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 avoid time off for any reason in the Summer term.

External examinations start at the beginning of May and run throughout June and cannot be re-scheduled.

Dates for Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9 internal examinations are detailed in the pupil planner.

PTA NEWS / NEWYDDION Y GYMDEITHAS RIENI

The PTA at Cwmtawe is a small group of active parents and teachers with a common goal - improving the quality of provision for your children.

If you are interested in joining the PTA, then contact Mrs. G. Morgan at the school.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY **DYDDIADAU AR GYFER Y DYDDIADUR**

8th-13th April	Sports Tour	15th May	Year 9 Reports out
13th April	First day back for pupils (Summer Term)	18th-21st May	Year 7 and 8 Internal Exams
15th-17th April	Year 9 Internal Exams	25th-29th May	Whitsun Half Term Break
22nd April	Year 7 Parents' Evening	1st June	INSET day
28th April	Year 9 Ghost Street Road Safety Training	13th June	NPTC Open Day - 10am-2pm
30th April	Junior Maths Challenge	17th June	GCSE examinations end
4th May	May Day Bank Holiday	17th June	Year 7 Maths event in Swansea University
5th-7th May	National Reading and Numeracy tests	19th June	Year 7 History trip
8th May	GCSE examinations start	23rd June	New intake Parents' Evening
8th May	Year 8/9 Welsh Trip to Cardiff	25th June	Year 10 transition event at NPTC

Pupils get active at Llangrannog



The Welsh department ran its annual, fun-packed activity weekend at the Urdd Residential Centre in Llangrannog last December.

There were a host of activities for the pupils which included a dry ski slope, horse riding, a swimming pool, tobogganing, go-karts, quad bikes, archery, a climbing course, astroturf football, games in the sports hall as well as trampolining.

Evening discos and quizzes were a chance to relax informally after the day's exertions.

The Centre and surrounding picturesque area has a distinct Welsh environment which gave pupils the opportunity to improve their language skills through play and activities.

Course co-ordinator, Caryl Evans, said "Many pupils return regularly to the centre, reflecting their enjoyment of the course. It is a mix of fun



and learning new skills, and it's just as well that the centre's food is tasty and plentiful after all the open-air activities.

The pupils really enjoy the beautiful coastline and countryside at Llangrannog and it's great to hear the children practising their Welsh with the staff of the centre."

Talk the Talk



On the 6th January, every pupil in Year 9 took part in a day-long workshop to help improve their oracy skills in English lessons and across the whole curriculum.

The workshops were provided by trainers from 'Talk the Talk' (some of whom had backgrounds in acting and TV presenting) and pupils took part in a variety of activities to improve their confidence and ability to communicate in a variety of situations.



Discovering the park life at Margam



Year 10 pupils spent two days in Margam in January as part of their GCSE studies carrying out plant and animal surveys, an investigation into wind energy and pond dipping as well as enjoying some fun around a campfire.

In February, a group of very enthusiastic Year 7 pupils enjoyed a busy two days in Margam exploring rivers, hills and mud! They undertook geographical investigations into rivers and wind energy, completed an orienteering course, learned about sustainability and practised team building.



Pupils board the GSUS bus



In March, the school was visited by GSUS Live. GSUS Live is a mobile classroom which tours Great Britain. It has a multimedia computer suite providing thought-provoking lessons for secondary school pupils. Within this stimulating environment they investigate the Christian teachings on fear, forgiveness, rejection and discover how Jesus acts as a role model in the lives of Christians.

Pupils who had the opportunity to engage in this activity found it "fun" and "interesting".



Pupils celebrate annual Eisteddfod

The annual School Eisteddfod to celebrate our patron saint was a major success yet again with pupils competing to earn points for their houses in diverse competitions such as street dance, music, recitation and folk dancing.

They spent hours preparing under the enthusiastic guidance of Year 10 pupils. Prizes were also awarded to the winners in homework competitions in all subjects.

Pupils were dressed in their house colours and at the end of an exuberant day the victorious house was the Blue House.

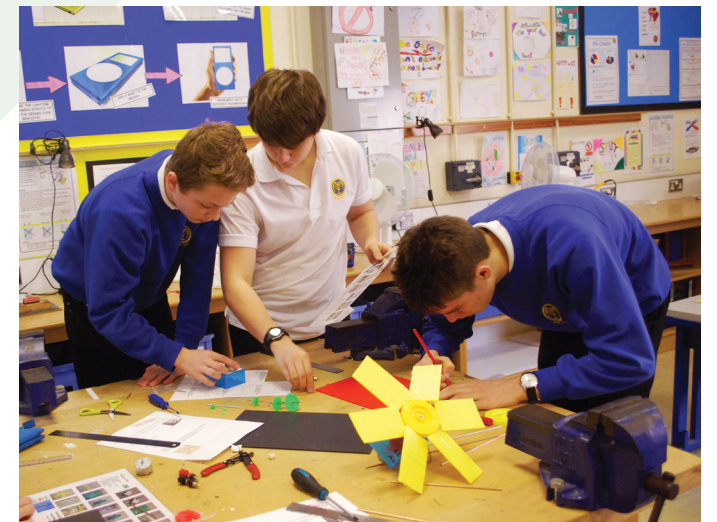


Building a better future



Thirty Year 9 pupils took part in a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) day based around the generation of energy.

They constructed fan units with gearboxes to generate wind energy, used solar panels and built battery units using nails and vinegar - all to power a calculator that they needed to solve a mathematical code. It was a fantastic day with only one downside - the technology workshop smelt like a chip shop from all the vinegar!



Peer Mentors



On Wednesday, 18th March, peer mentors attended a county wide event at the Princess Royal Theatre, Port Talbot, to share good practice with peer mentors from other schools.

Peer mentoring is an innovative scheme to help younger pupils settle into the new environment of a larger school, and headteacher Lee Hitchings praised Cwmtawe's mentoring team for taking on such a responsible role.



The taste of success



The Swansea Valley's very own young Masterchef will be pitched against winners from across Wales and the west of England in the next round of the Rotary Young Chef Competition.

Lewis Jones, Year 10, won high praise at the South Wales round of the Rotary competition where he competed against pupils from 15 schools.

He wowed the judges with an eye-watering menu including leek and potato soup, chicken wrapped in prosciutto and profiteroles in a raspberry coulis.



Girls football squad in a league of their own



Well done to the Under 15 girls football team who this season reached the quarter finals of the Welsh Schools' Cup competition.

Unfortunately the girls lost 4-3 to Cardiff High School but demonstrated a determined attitude from start to finish.

Congratulations to the Under 13s girls 6-a-side squad who recently won the SCFC indoor Inter-Counties Tournament.

The girls will now represent SCFC in May at this year's National Premiership Tournament at White Hart Lane, home to Tottenham Hotspur Football Club. Well done girls!

A huge congratulations also to the U13 girls football squad who played Cwm Rhymni in the semi-final of the Welsh Schools' Cup on Tuesday 24th March winning 4-1. The girls will now travel to TNS, Oswestry on 9th/10th May to play Ysgol Dyffryn Teifi in the Welsh Cup Final. Pob lwc merched!



Pupils go wild for Fair-trade Fortnight



Fairtrade Fortnight was again organised and run by pupils with many events across the school.

This year a pop-up Rainforest Café opened in one of the Geography classrooms selling Fairtrade drinks and snacks against a background of plants and rainforest sounds!

A raffle for a hamper of Fairtrade chocolates was held throughout and a Fairtrade Bake-Off judged by our very own Paul Hollywood and Mary Berry (Mr Hitchings and Miss Edwards) provided cakes for our final event, a Fairtrade Tea Break for staff.

All money raised will be split between Size of Wales and other environmental projects at school.



Year 11 pupils take to the cat walk

Year 11 enjoyed a fantastic time preparing for their Prom Fashion Show on 11th February.

Twelve girls and twelve boys took to the catwalk, modelling suits from Hanson Hire and dresses from Stardust Boutique. They were also lucky to have their hair styled by Kelly Louise and makeup by Jo Ribbons.

The models were joined by many talented musicians who performed on the evening.

Back Left: Scott Simons, Sam Kretzschmar, Harri Evans-Mason, Scott Havard-Morris, Ben Williams, Harry Morgan, Jack Cromwell, Kieran Francis, Alex Bowmer, Llew Gibson, Ben Adams.

Front Left: Charlie Bloomer, Rebecca Andrews, Abbie Llewellyn, Emily Evans, Leah Sell, Charlotte Richards, Claire Parker, Darrian Harris, Kaila Jones, Amber Thomas, Rebecca Dalling, Katie Coleman.



Sharing a love for languages



Five Year 10 linguists were selected to attend the first ever language ambassador conference and training event in City Hall, Cardiff on Thursday, 5th February.

Pupils participated in various workshops with representatives from l'Institut français, the Goethe-Institut, CiLT Cymru and Routes into Languages to make them aware how learning a language can improve career prospects.

They were presented with language ambassador badges and certificates from their training day.



German Christmas markets trip



Year 10 pupils spent the last week of the Autumn term visiting the Christmas markets of Bonn and Cologne.

They enjoyed a festive advent trip on the river Rhine, savouring a three course meal.

Pupils also tested their ice-skating skills in the open air at Bonn and visited the Winter Wonderland at one of Europe's largest theme parks in Phantasialand.



Spreading the Christmas cheer with a cheery Christmas spread

Over 110 of our local senior citizens joined us again in December for our annual Christmas lunch.

A mouth-watering festive menu was served up by our Year 9 pupils whilst our orchestra entertained our guests.

The lunch is a much anticipated event at this time of year where we welcome a large number of seniors from the Pontardawe area and help spread the spirit of Christmas. It has grown vastly in popularity over the last few years.

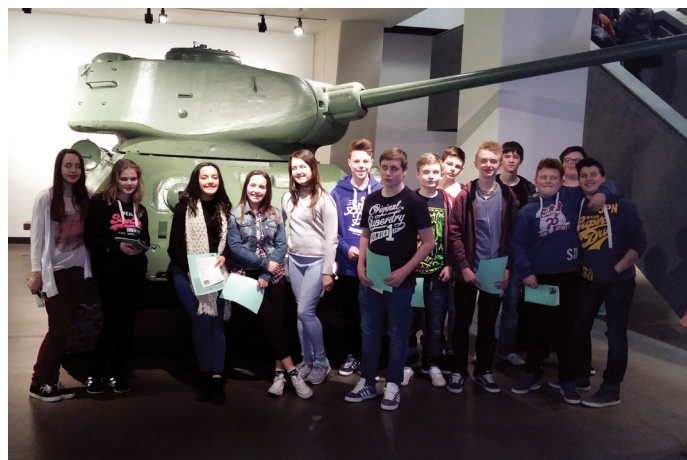


Visit to the Imperial War Museum



In February, Year 9 pupils visited the Imperial War Museum, London to explore the new ground-breaking First World War Galleries and the Holocaust Exhibition.

Year 11 pupils were also provided with the opportunity to develop their prior knowledge of the Holocaust, by attending Pontardawe Arts Centre, to view the critically acclaimed film 'La Vita Bella'. The film was about a Jewish family whose happiness was halted when they were taken to a concentration camp during the war. It focused on the father trying to find shelter for his son from the horrors of his surroundings.



Pupils hit the slopes in Austria and the USA

Forty Year 11 pupils spent a fun and exciting half term immersing themselves fully into the Austrian way of life. Throughout the week pupils not only learnt to ski but also took part in some traditional Austrian sports such as curling and sampled the tasty Austrian cuisine such as Kaiserschmarrn (otherwise known as shredded pancakes). The Year 10 pupils are now eager to hand in deposits for the 2016 trip.

Another group of forty pupils went on a skiing holiday during half term - not to Europe but to the United States of America! Five days were spent skiing in Killington, Vermont, in perfect snow conditions - cold, with lots of powder.

Ski Instructors commented on the "excellent behaviour and positive attitude of all students who were always eager to learn new skills".

Bill Huber the Senior Instructor, mentioned the caring, positive attitude of the pupils and their willingness to share ski lifts up the mountain, sing to him and teach him Welsh words. Skiing was followed by two days sightseeing in New York. We now look forward to planning next year's trip.



Sculpting success in Art and Design



A group of Year 9 pupils who have opted to take GCSE Art were given the opportunity to work with local sculpture artist Nigel Talbot.

Pupils illustrated an environmental poem and applied their design to a clay tile.

The tiles will now feature in a site specific wooden installation in Cwm Du Glen.



Pupils prove their strength in numbers



The mathematics department entered 20 pupils from Year 11, 18 pupils from Year 10 and 12 pupils from Year 9 for the 2015 Intermediate Mathematics Challenge. The challenge is a national competition run by the United Kingdom Mathematics Trust to identify the top mathematicians in the country.

From a national entry of over 200,000 pupils, only the top 6% receive gold certificates, the next 13% receive silver awards and the following 21% receive bronze awards.

The school's pupils were very successful gaining 2 gold, 9 silver and 5 bronze awards. The successful candidates were:-

Year 11		
Gold	Silver	Bronze
Finley Topping Benjamin Williams	Ioan Clarke Gareth Thomas Gaby Hornshaw Megan Blackford	Owen Evans Charlie Bloomer
Year 10		
	Kira Wodehouse Rhianedd Williams Ryan Carson	Imran Khan-White
Year 9		
	Katy Bloomer	Joe Lane Hannah Carson-Jones

Finley Topping and Benjamin Williams qualified for the next round of the competition to compete against students from across Europe in the 'Pink Kangaroo' for Year 11 students.

Katy Bloomer also qualified to compete against students from across Europe in the 'Grey Kangaroo' for Year 9 students.

Credit Union

Did you know that we have our own bank in school? Do you want to save for trips or the School Prom? The Credit Union could be for you.

Get into good saving habits by putting money into your account every Monday and Thursday lunchtimes. Credit Union is open 1.20pm-1.50pm outside the drama studio.

Please come and visit us or see Miss V. Ellis in T3 to open an account.

Music



On Wednesday 25th March, Hannah Murphy and the School Brass Band competed against Ystylafera in the County round of the Urdd. Hannah won her competition with a musical and moving performance on solo clarinet.

Ystylafera's orchestra performed a rousing arrangement of Fiddler On The Roof. Only a performance of the highest quality was going to challenge and Cwmtawe's brass band did not disappoint.

A near perfect execution of Eye Of The Tiger, Suo Gan and Toccata and Fugue was enough to sway the adjudicators and give Cwmtawe 1st place and the opportunity to perform at the televised finals at Caerphilly in May.



Kicking up a storm



Year 7 pupil, Andrew Perkins has wowed fellow pupils and staff alike with his prowess and progress in the Welsh Kickboxing Union.

Andrew has not only won his defence belt at the WKU's 'Way of the Warrior' competition but more recently earned the title of Welsh champion in the WKU's Welsh Rumble competition earning himself a 'full contact' belt.

He is now working towards another full contact match, taking place next month where he will be fighting to earn the Celtic title and his second full contact belt.





Trips back through time



Year 10 pupils attended an educational visit to Cardiff Castle to see a Barber Surgeon workshop.

Learners found out more about the blood-curdling techniques of medieval medicine, in order to develop their knowledge for the forthcoming modular examination.

In March, Year 11 History students also attended 'Hitler on Trial' at the National Museum Cardiff. The trial opened with an exam-busting workshop and was followed by a courtroom drama.

Students were asked to imagine a parallel historical world in which Adolf Hitler was captured alive by British Special Forces in 1942 and put on trial in a British court.

Embracing the Call of the Wild



During four days over March, a group of 15 pupils from Years 8 and 9 attended a course run by Call of the Wild to improve self confidence, motivation and help them deal with issues in and out of school.

The course, which was based in the 'Green Classroom' - a converted farmhouse on the hillside in Abercrave - set out to challenge the pupils and develop team spirit, communication and perseverance.

The course director, Mr Dave Thomas, used his years of experience of working with young people to stretch pupils and develop important life skills. There will be follow-up sessions with the group to further develop and consolidate the lessons learnt.



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Ffordd Parc Ynysderw
Pontardawe
Swansea SA8 4EG

HEADTEACHER / PRIFATHRO:
Mr. C. L. Hitchings

EMAIL / EBOST: cwmtaweschool@npted.org
TEL / FFÔN: 01792 863200
FAX / FFACS: 01792 864773