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YSGOL GYMUNEDOL
CWMTAWE
COMMUNITY SCHOOL

PARENTS' NEWSLETTER

Easter 2017

CYLCHLYTHYR RHINI

Pasg 2017

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 few 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 gwybodaeth am y rhychwant o gyfleoedd a brofwyd dros y misoedd diwethaf. Rwy'n gobeithio y byddwch yn mwynhau ei ddarllen.

Yours sincerely

Mr. C.L. Hitchings

HEADTEACHER / PRIFATHRO

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE CURRENTLY STANDS AT **94.1%**

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 achievement.

EXAMINATIONS / ARHOLIADAU

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

External examinations start at the beginning of May, 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, please contact Mrs. G. Morgan (Assistant Headteacher) at the school.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY DYDDIADAU AR GYFER Y DYDDIADUR

24 April	INSET day	16-20 June	Year 7 French trip
25 April	Pupils return after the Easter closure	20 June	Year 8 trip to Techniquet
26 April	Year 7 Parents' Evening	20 June	New Intake Parents' Evening
26-28 April	Year 9 Internal Exams	26 June	Year 11 Leavers' Prom
1 May	School closed for May Day Bank Holiday	27 June	Year 7 Induction Day
5 May	Welsh department trip to Cardiff	28 June	Year 10 NPTC Taster Day
10 May	Year 10 English Literature trip to Cardiff	28 June	Year 7 Skills Day
15 & 16 May	Year 9 Immunisations	30 June	Year 7 History trip to Cardiff
23-26 May	Year 7 & 8 Internal Exams	3 July	Year 10 Gower College Taster Day
24 May	Year 10 Drama trip to Cardiff	5-9 July	Year 8 German Trip
5 June	New Year 10 timetable begins	10-13 July	Year 10 Internal Exams
7 June	Year 8 Parents' Evening	14-20 July	Music trip to Barcelona
		21 July	Last day of term

NEW WEBSITE / GWEFAN NEWYDD

Our new school website launched in March following a consultation with groups of pupils and parents. It is designed to enhance communication between school and home and features an all-new look.

It will continue to be developed over the coming months, with Welsh language translations coming this May. Please have a look and let us know if you think we've missed anything useful.

The website is one medium of communication and supplements the regular updates we post on Twitter and our termly school newsletters. We also use text messaging for urgent messages.



LLANGRANNOG

The Welsh department ran its annual, fun-packed activity weekend to the Urdd Residential Centre in Llangrannog last December. There were a host of activities for the pupils, which included the dry ski slope, horse riding, swimming pool, tobogganing, go-karts, quad bikes, archery, climbing course, astroturf football, games in the sports hall as well as trampolining.

Evening 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 leisure activities.

Course co-ordinator and Welsh teacher Caryl Evans said "many pupils return regularly to the centre, reflecting their enjoyment of the course. It is a combination of fun and learning new skills and it's just as well that the centre's food is tasty after all the open-air activities. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the beautiful coastline and countryside at Llangrannog and it's rewarding to hear them practising their Welsh with the staff at the centre".



INTERNET SAFETY / DIOGELWCH AR Y WE

Safer Internet Day was celebrated in school with a series of assemblies and form period activities focusing on staying safe online. All pupils were reminded of the importance of keeping their personal information private and not sharing online. Parents/Carers have also attended a session from PC Puckett looking at some of the current online issues and outlining where support can be found.

Online support and help can be found on the Common Sense Media website, this provides insight into books, games, movies and TV shows.

<https://www.common sense media.org/>

The Welsh Government have recently launched an online safety zone, where information and guidance can be found. <https://hwb.wales.gov.uk/onlinesafety>



GEOGRAPHY / DAEARYDDIAETH



Size of Wales

Nigel Little, from the rainforest charity Size of Wales, visited the school on Friday 10th February. Year 9 pupils enjoyed a series of workshops about the threats faced by the world's rainforests and what we can do to help. Pupils learned about deforestation caused by palm oil plantations and some pupils even got to taste it! Nigel also talked about what Cwmtawe's previous fundraising has helped with, including a project with the Waipichu tribe in the Amazon rainforest.



Margam

Pupils enjoyed a cold January weekend at Margam Discovery Centre studying rivers and renewable energy. They got very wet and muddy completing a mud challenge and enjoyed toasting marshmallows on the campfire.



Borth

Pupils studying GCSE Geography recently visited Borth for two days of coastal fieldwork. They walked the length of the coastline from the cliffs in the south to the nature reserve in the sand dunes of Ynyslas, learning about the different coastal environments and processes. They also explored the village of Borth to investigate why £6 million has recently been spent on coastal protection in this popular tourist spot.



ANTI-BULLYING / GWRTH-FWLIO

At Cwmtawe there is a 'zero tolerance' approach to bullying. The pastoral programme plays an important role not only in explicitly focusing on the problem of bullying but also through building skills and attitudes which encourage positive behaviour and develop mutual respect. Bullying, where it exists, often persists due to a reluctance on the part of victims and others to communicate the problem to those who are in a position to help solve the problem. Much is done through the efforts of all who work at Cwmtawe to create the kind of atmosphere where pupils have confidence in the adults and older pupils they work alongside. There is a high priority placed on creating the kind of ethos and environment where not only is it 'O.K. to tell' but also where pupils will be confident that their concerns will receive a sympathetic response. By working together, communicating with each other and being good citizens we can tackle this issue. More recently, whole school assemblies have been focussing on supporting the "Be Kind" Campaign. If you need any further information please contact your child's Head of Year or see our website for advice.

PUPILS CELEBRATE ANNUAL EISTEDDFOD

The annual School Eisteddfod was an overwhelming success with pupils competing to earn points for their houses in a wide range of competitions such as street dance, music, recitation and folk dancing.

Hours were spent rehearsing under the enthusiastic guidance of pupils from Years 10 and 11. Winners in homework competitions in all subjects were also awarded prizes.

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



VISIT TO OXFORD UNIVERSITY

In February this year, thirteen of our Year 11 pupils were given the opportunity to visit Jesus College Oxford as part of the University's "Oxford Pathways" programme. The programme is designed to encourage more able and talented pupils from non-selective comprehensive schools to study at Oxford. During the visit, the pupils were given a tour of this beautiful and historic college and also a taster lecture. Lunch was also provided in the magnificent surroundings of the Jesus College Refectory. Welsh pupils are currently under-represented at Oxford and the college is keen to increase the number of applicants from Wales. For more information visit the Oxford University home page or www.pathways.ox.ac.uk.



CWMTAWE'S MASTERCHEF

Cwmtawe School's very own young Masterchef was pitched against some of the best young chefs from across Wales at the final of the Rotary Future Chef competition held in Cardiff in February.

Deputy Head Girl, Harriet Sadler, won high praise and wowed the judges with a two course menu of stuffed chicken wrapped in bacon, vegetable mash with a cauliflower cheese, followed by a pear and blackberry crumble with pistachio ice cream. Speaking after the competition, Harriet said 'I am glad of the school's support as I have learned so much about cooking and nutrition.' Well done to Harriet and to Miss Ellis, who supported her throughout the competition.



MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES / IEITHOEDD TRAMOR MODERN

Our Year 9 spent a day doing a carousel of modern foreign languages careers workshops to raise awareness of the enhanced opportunities available to pupils who study a modern foreign language.

The top picture shows Andrew Mattick (Teacher of German and French), Emily (Student Language Ambassador), Tim Penn (Business Language Champion), Ariane Laumonier (Alliance Française), Angharad Evans (Head of French - event organiser) and Alex Pickering (Goethe Institute).

Some of the activities included:

- Ariane from the Alliance Française asking pupils to work on discussing various tweets from football stars - why does he (Paul Pogba) tweet bilingually?
- Emily, the student language ambassador, asking pupils "can we just use google translate and not bother learning another language?"
- Pupils working out which brands come from which company and country, with Alex Pickering.



BOYS' FOOTBALL / PÊL-DROED BECHGYN

The Year 9 football team are Welsh Cup semi-finalists.



BOYS' RUGBY / RYGBI BECHGYN

In the Rugby 7s competition hosted by Bishopston, the Year 9 team were finalists, playing 7 games, winning 6 of them, but unfortunately losing to Ysgol Bro Myrddin in the final.

The Year 9 team are going from strength to strength! Having beaten Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera in the quarter finals of the Welsh Cup, they are now through to the semi finals.

GIRLS' FOOTBALL / PÊL-DROED MERCHED

U13s Girls' Football

Cwmtawe's U13 girls recently won the NPT 6-a-side tournament at BP Llandarcy and qualified for the Inter-Regional Finals. After some excellent performances, the girls unfortunately got knocked out in the quarter finals by Dyffryn Teifi. Well done to the squad: Holly Salmons, Mayah Lewis, Asha Jimpson, Kelly Crodisine, Megan Amber (C), Selina Jones, Victoria Perkins and Cerys Marlow.



U15s Girls' Football

After an outstanding season playing 11 games undefeated, the Cwmtawe U15s took on Glantaf away in the Semi Final of the Welsh Cup. Sadly, after a hard fought match, the girls were knocked out of the competition by a tough Glantaf team that won 4-2. The girls were Welsh Champions last year and, despite not making the final this year, will always treasure the memories of 2016 when they did win the Welsh Cup. They have made their coach and the school very proud. The squad, shown opposite, are: Emily Richards (C), Jamie Edwards, Nia Probert, Kaycie Hayes, Lettie Tomkins, Rosie Morrissey, Rachel Graham, Zoe Laugharne, Abigail Phillips, Katie Davies, Katelyn Kneath, Shannon Cooper-Richards, Megan Amber, Sophie John, Selina Jones, and Holly Salmons.



A special mention to Miss Hare who has put in a huge amount of time and effort to help coach and run the football teams this season at Cwmtawe. The girls will miss you greatly. Thank you Miss Hare!

PROM FASHION SHOW

The end of school prom is one of the eagerly anticipated events of the school year for Year 11 pupils and a fitting celebration of their five years at Cwmtawe. As a taster, pupils organised a prom fashion show during the Spring term, which as well as being very enjoyable also raised funds to offset some of the costs of running their prom.

A group of pupils took to the catwalk, modelling suits from Hanson Hire, Neath, and dresses from the Dress Parlour, Clydach. They were also fortunate to have their hair styled by Bethan Power.

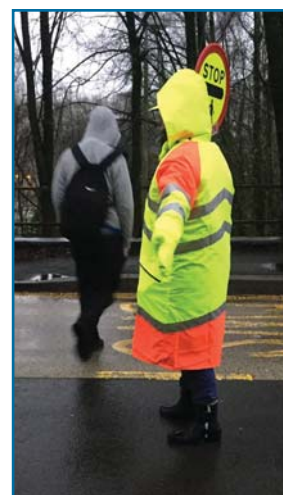
The evening was adeptly compered by Miss Ardolino and models were joined by many talented musicians who performed on the evening.

They are all now eagerly anticipating the real prom, to be held at the Manor Park on 26 June.



SCHOOL CROSSING PATROL

Thanks to the efforts of Pontardawe Town Council, supported by Cwmtawe Community School, a School Crossing Patrol has been reinstated on Swansea Road, Trebanos.



GERMAN / ALMAENEG

German Christmas Markets

In December, a group of Year 10 pupils spent a weekend at the Christmas markets of Bonn and Cologne. They enjoyed a festive advent trip on the river Rhine, savouring a three course meal. Pupils also visited the cathedral and climbed to the top for a breath-taking view over Bonn. No trip would be complete without a visit to the Winter Wonderland at one of Europe's largest theme parks in Phantasialand. A trip has already been planned for next Christmas.



HISTORY / HANES

Barber Surgeon

On the 25th January, the History Department took Year 10 GCSE pupils to Cardiff Castle to attend a workshop on Medieval Medicine. Pupils found out about the blood-curdling techniques of medieval medicine from the Barber Surgeon: tales of the Black Death, treating battle wounds, setting bones and pulling teeth – not to mention the blood-letting and the leeches!

Hitler on Trial, National Museum, Cardiff

Hitler on Trial was a half-day presentation designed to help students improve their performance in the GCSE History examinations.

Hitler on Trial opened with a grade-booster workshop in which the workshop leader explained the thinking behind the exam specifications, and showed students ways of improving their examination performance.

The workshop was followed by a courtroom drama in which students were asked to imagine a parallel historical world in which Adolf Hitler was captured by British Special Forces in 1942 and put on trial in a British court. In the court, the students were the jury and the play ended with the students voting whether or not they found Hitler guilty.

FIRE FIGHTERS! / YMLADDWYR TAN!

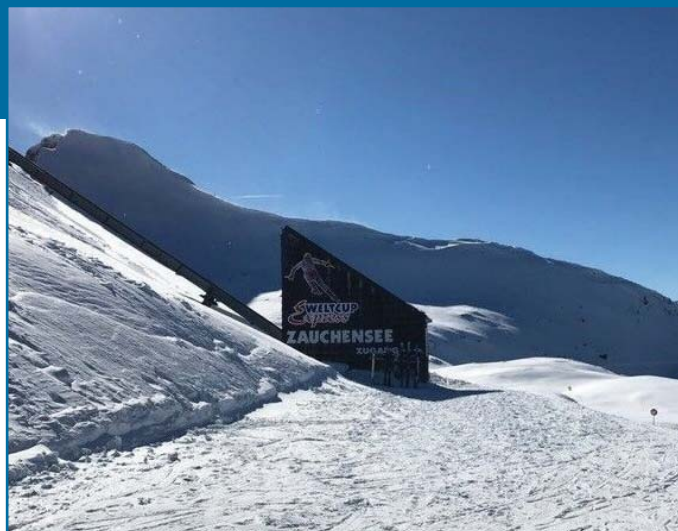
A group of Year 10 pupils recently achieved the Phoenix Fire Fighting Certificate. Over five days, ten pupils performed various team building activities including hose work, climbing ladders, emergency search and rescue from a blacked-out building and lots more. The Senior Fire Officer and assessor said 'The team were superb; they used the specialist skills they learned throughout the week and passed the final challenge of a full simulated fire drill with flying colours'.

The boys achieved Agored Cymru Level 2 'Personal and Social Education'. The units of the award covered 'Fire Safety in the Home' and 'Principles and Practice of Fire Fighting'.



SKI TRIP TO AUSTRIA

A group of Year 10 and 11 pupils enjoyed a fantastic week skiing in Zauchensee, Austria over the February half-term break. They skied in all weather conditions from blazing sunshine, to fresh powder snow falling and even rain! They enjoyed their week being fully immersed into the Austrian culture and were able to sample Austrian food on the slopes at its best. Pupils not only enjoyed the daily activity of skiing but also threw themselves into evening activities such as a quiz night, bowling, swimming and sledging.



On arriving in the resort most pupils were beginners, only ever having been skiing in Pembrey dry ski slope in the weeks before our departure. By the time we left however they were all skiing down the mountain on blue and red slopes with some even skiing black slopes too - what a result! A fantastic time was had by all.



USA SKI TRIP

A group of thirty Cwmtawe pupils enjoyed a fantastic American skiing experience in Stowe, Vermont during February half term. This included a daily trip on the American school bus and a college ice hockey match. This was followed by two days' sightseeing and shopping experience in the beautiful and historical city of Boston where we were shown around by the American tour guide, Joe Zuckerman. Pupils also experienced breakfast in a typical American diner where they sampled the famous pancakes, bacon and maple syrup and an evening meal in Joe's Diner.



ALCOHOL AWARENESS DAY

As part of our commitment to ensuring that children in the community are aware of the issues with alcohol and drug abuse, Cwmtawe joined forces with the Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP) and other partners to organise an awareness event. The multi-agency initiative, which took place on 8th February at school, included a wide range of partners and focussed on the effects and influences both drugs and alcohol can have.

The Year 10 pupils were given the opportunity to hear a talk by Paul Pugh on 'Paul's Pledge', his positive response to suffering severe life-changing injuries in an unprovoked attack, for which four men were jailed. His pledge is to ask people to show support and vow to never condone violent behaviour, to walk away from aggression and violence and to encourage friends and family to do the same.



Assistant Headteacher Gemma Morgan said:

"After speaking to the Whole School Council and local PCSOs, we felt that alcohol awareness should be addressed with all year groups, particularly Year 10. Cwmtawe School has been working closely with CAP for almost a year to offer alternatives to our young people and to highlight the clubs and activities on offer in the local community. Pupils heard from many different organisations including the police, medical profession, WACADA and Paul Pugh. The highlight for many of the pupils was the activities carousel held in Pontardawe Leisure Centre, where many of these organisations and clubs had displays, with more information on show."

ECO SCHOOLS CONFERENCE

Anastasia Stockton, Harri Thomas, both Year 10 pupils, together with Cerys Gill and Charlie Gould from Year 9, represented Cwmtawe at the March Eco Schools Conference in Cardiff, which concentrated on waste management issues, particularly looking at ideas to encourage schools and the wider public to reduce litter.



HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

Holocaust Memorial Day is commemorated every year on January 27th. This is the day when the UK, remembers all those affected by the Holocaust, Nazi persecution and subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda and Darfur. All across the UK, hundreds of thousands of people were marking HMD in 2017 in many public and private sectors. Cwmtawe Community School honoured Holocaust Memorial Day 2017 through daily presentations in morning registration and year group assemblies.



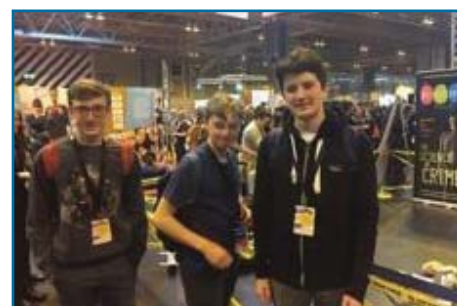
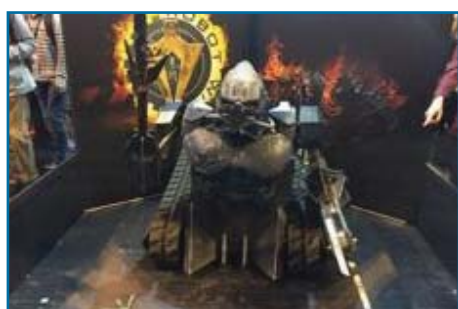
The theme for this year's Holocaust Memorial Day was 'How can life go on?' Amelie Boyce 8EJ sang as pupils entered assemblies. Throughout each assembly pupils learnt about Elie Wiesel, whose life went on in a positive manner as he dedicated his life to standing up against injustice. Throughout the presentation, Llian Davies and Lauren Jones, both members of Cwmtawe School Choir, created an emotional and reflective atmosphere, singing 'Read all about it' by Emeli Sande and 'With you' from the musical Ghost. Pupils appreciated that it is important that life will go on and that lessons are learnt.

SCIENCE / GWYDDONIAETH



Big Bang Fair

The Science Department organised a trip to the Big Bang Fair at Birmingham NEC during the Spring term. This is the largest celebration of science technology, engineering and maths in the UK. Pupils had an enjoyable day and saw the many exciting and rewarding opportunities that are open to them through science.



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

If you are unhappy about something, please speak to your child's Head of Year in the first instance. Most matters can be dealt with quickly and efficiently.

If after speaking to the Head of Year you are still unhappy, ask to speak to the Deputy Headteacher. If the matter is still unresolved, then please make an appointment to speak to the Headteacher.

Our full complaints procedure is published on our website www.cwmtawe.org

MUSIC / CERDD

Membership of the newly formed Ukulele Club, which meets on Tuesday lunchtimes, is growing steadily. Ukulele players gave a rousing start to this year's school Eisteddfod when they accompanied the first inter-house singing competition. New members are always welcome to come along, especially to the new Monday lunchtime beginners' group.



URDD SUCCESS

Cwmtawe pupils were successful recently in the group recital at the Urdd Eisteddfod, going through to the next round.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Over the past two years, staff training has had a renewed focus on teaching and learning. Working in partnership with the University of Wales Trinity Saint David and OLEVI, the International Centre for Learning and Teaching, we are a host school delivering the Outstanding Teacher Programme (OTP) to secondary and primary colleagues across the ERW region. We were keen to launch the OTP as it delivers intensive training sessions for teachers with a sharp focus on questioning, metacognition, coaching and self-regulation. To date thirty five Cwmtawe teachers have participated in this programme with four staff trained to deliver the course as OTP Facilitators. We are aiming for all staff to receive training over the next two years.

The OTP has had a significant impact upon our school. It has further raised the quality of teaching and learning; equipping staff with strategies and skills and increasing confidence to be more experimental in planning. Furthermore the OTP has promoted an 'open door' ethos where staff are willing to be observed to support the professional development of colleagues.

Currently we are trialling the use of IRIS Connect with a team of staff. IRIS Connect is a video- based professional learning platform, which allows lessons to be recorded. It is an excellent tool for professional development allowing teachers to reflect upon their delivery; to improve the quality of lesson observation and feedback and also to collaborate and share ideas with colleagues.

P.E.

Sam Davies (Year 7) won gold and bronze medals from the West Wales indoor athletics championships - gold in long jump and bronze in high jump.



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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