



OPTION CHOICES FOR PUPILS

As you can see from the 'dates for your diary' section we have planned a number of information evenings for parents and pupils in Years 9 and 11 to assist with the important task of course selection for Key Stage Four and the Sixth Form.

We have provided two main option lines for the sixth form, an advanced line (AS and A2) for those likely to attain at least 5 GCSEs at A*-C and an intermediate line for those who want to increase their GCSEs and embark on BTEC vocational courses. For Year 10 2008-9 we are providing three learning pathways, one based on GCSEs, one based on GCSEs and vocational qualifications and one based on vocational qualifications and experience. We will do our very best to maintain the number of options for pupils and provide support and guidance for parents and pupils in the process of selecting the right course. Detailed booklets are available from school and the Year 9 and Sixth Form team are available to provide individual guidance.

FAIRTRADE

The Penglais Fair Trade group ran a stall selling healthy Fair Trade snacks for a week last term in order to promote Fair Trade and raise money for Oxfam. The money raised was added to donations to the Fair Trade coffee stall during the year 8 parents' evening, making a total of £50. The group "bought a bog" by contributing to an Oxfam project which provides sanitation and toilet facilities to schools in developing countries or communities experiencing disasters such as earthquakes and tsunamis. The group would like to thank Waunfawr Co-op store and Alison Jones for donating food for the stall.

DAWNS-TASTIG

Congratulations and very well done to Clarrissa and Rebecca!! If you have been following the programme on S4C you would have seen Clarrissa Busson, Year 9 and Rebecca Thomas, Year 10 being chosen as two of the eight finalists of Dawns-tastig shown on Thursday 27th December. They both went on to London with the other six finalists. This was viewed on New Year's Day. The prize was to have some dance lessons in the 'Pineapple Studios', London and then to take part in the end of term show in Stratford Circus. Both girls endured nine weeks, nine rounds of different styles of dance from ballet, Irish dance and even a hip hop video with a Welsh rapper! It was excellent viewing. Congratulations once again to you both – your hard work definitely paid off.

BUDGET AND COUNTY LANGUAGE POLICY

In the next week the school will be receiving preliminary budget information for 2008-9. There has been coverage in the press about the difficulties the council is facing in balancing the budget this year. An increase in council tax has already been reported with £300,000 being earmarked for secondary school budgets. This allocation was absolutely essential to stave off disaster in the secondary sector. Whether it is enough will depend on the full allocation to be discussed this week. The overall situation is bleak not only this year but next year as well. We will do our best to maintain the school's curriculum, staffing, equipment, buildings and premises but it is likely to be extremely difficult. The scale of underfunding in the secondary sector since 2004 in Ceredigion is totalling over £1million. I shall keep you fully informed as plans are worked out in the next month.

The Cabinet has recently approved a new county language policy which will also be examined and discussed in the next few weeks. The governing body has already resourced improvements for provision for the increasing numbers of pupils following programmes of study in Welsh as a first language. This has been combined with measures to enhance the Welsh ethos of the school so that all pupils, regardless of linguistic background, will benefit. I will provide more information in the next newsletter.



ENGLISH

Duchess of Malfi - Last year it was Leeds. This year, the search for a stage production of ‘The Duchess of Malfi’ for Year 13 took us to the Playhouse in Oxford to see what OUDS (The Oxford University Dramatic Society) would make of Webster’s Jacobean Revenge Tragedy. The day started chilly and bright, and the marathon coach journey was not an unpleasant one – although when we found ourselves heading north on the M5 towards Birmingham there was a moment’s trepidation – but we arrived amidst the dreaming spires with just enough time for a quick college sandwich before settling in amongst the other matinee watchers.

You always feel a slight concern when taking pupils to a non-professional production, but the Oxford students did not disappoint and it was interesting to see how they chose to interpret the characters. The setting was updated to somewhere in the twentieth century and there were some unusual stage devices used to convey the decadence and corruption of the Italian court. After the performance we had arranged a short talk with the director and our pupils asked him some probing questions about his Bosola (too much of a nice guy), about the scenes cut from the text (what happened to Forobosco?) and acting at university (where do you find the time?). The director (not much older than our students of course) seemed impressed by the depth of knowledge that informed the questions; our pupils were pleased to be allowed so close to the footlights and grease paint – ‘Look there’s Antonio!’ remarked one as a rather bashful undergraduate smiled and waved his way hurriedly out of the theatre.

There was a little time to savour the delights of academia before we were all back on the bus heading westwards via the Severn Bridge. As with the trip to Leeds last year, the consensus was that, whatever the minor shortcomings of the production, there is nothing like seeing a play in performance and we look forward to our next long day out.

Poetry of Keats – In October the English Department was delighted that Dr. Richard Marggraf Turley accepted an invitation to address Year 13 students about the poetry of John Keats. Dr. Marggraf Turley is a senior lecturer at Aberystwyth University in the Department of English. He is also Co-Director of the Centre for Romantic Studies. Year 13 found his presentation stimulating and thought-provoking and the ensuing discussion was diverse and challenging. We would like to thank him for sharing his ideas and giving of his time.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE – Year 13 Students visit Pathology Laboratories at Bronglais Hospital.

Penglais students were privileged to have been given a tour and a talk by Caroline Longman, Manager Microbiology and Caroline Fitzpatrick, Manager Haematology.

The students are currently working on an assignment “Investigating diseases” part of which involves understanding how different diseases are diagnosed. At Bronglais the students were able to appreciate the dedication of the staff to not letting any diagnostic opportunity pass by. Ms. Longman showed how different bacterial cultures were identified from urine and stool samples and how their resistance to various antibiotics could be tested. Ms. Fitzpatrick, Haematology Laboratory Manager showed how blood was tested for irregularities, comparing normal samples with those containing parasites and excessive white cells as well as the essential job of establishing a patient’s blood type before a transfusion could take place.



The picture shows Caroline Longman, Microbiology Laboratory Manager, with Health and Social Care students Erinn Carr-Murphy, Catrin Price-Walker and Katy Griffiths.

It was a real insight into the organisational detail and responsibilities undertaken by hospital laboratory staff, who, seemed to really enjoy their work as part of the Hospital Team.



Ms Longman shows the how resistance to 3 antibiotics is tested on a bacterial culture.

MATHEMATICS

A number of students recently submitted photographs in the Mathcymru photo competition. There were some really beautiful interpretations of Maths in its various guises including an astonishingly pleasing picture of the roof at the Sennedd by Liam Cashman in 7NG. His photo and some of the other entries will be available from viewing online at www.mathcymru.org. Liam was chosen as the Key Stage 3 winner by Mathcymru / Techniquet with a prize of a digital camera for the school. Congratulations to Liam and better luck next time to all those who took part.

Mr. P.A. Dennis, Head of Maths

MUSIC

Christmas Concert Tour

On Thursday 6th December Mrs J Leggett led a party of 51 pupils to Germany, to celebrate the 10th year of our official twinning with Kronberg, and perform at the Christmas Market. After a long, and at times, rough journey, the pupils performed in the Stadhalle in Kronberg, in front of locals and officials from Aberystwyth. On Saturday afternoon the choir and orchestra braved a very cold wind to play at the Christmas market in Bad Homburg, and had a guided tour of the castle. In the evening the choir sang two pieces during the Catholic mass at Heilig - Kreuz church in Bad Homburg, and then staged a performance in the church, after the service, for about 45 minutes. Most of the congregation remained for the performance,



and enjoyed the varieties of choir, wind and brass ensembles. On Sunday morning the pupils performed in the beautiful setting of Johanneskirche, Kronberg, after the brass band had done some busking up the medieval street. All the choirs, brass, wind and string ensembles helped raise the roof to a packed church. The pupils then finished their music duties by singing a range of carols at the Christmas market in Kronberg. As always each performance was well received by enthusiastic and appreciative audiences and it was a pleasure to share our Christmas music, both traditional and modern with our Kronberg friends. To relax before the long journey home the party enjoyed a game of 10 Pin Bowls, with Mr Evans posting the winning score. After an evening quiz, organised by the sixth formers, the party made their way home on Monday, arriving at 6.45 am Tuesday, with just a handful of pupils earning their stripes by making school for 9am. Students are to be congratulated for their dedication in preparing an extensive programme of music for the visit and their willingness to take on a punishing performance schedule both in Germany and throughout the last two weeks of the term. Many thanks go to Mrs Leggett for all her time and effort in organising the trip, and also Herr Fritz Pratschke for his organisation in Kronberg.



Christmas Tree Lights and Hafan y Waun

Enthusiastic Junior singers and the Brass ensemble took on the challenge of performing for two Christmas Tree Lights evenings towards the end of term - one was in Aberystwyth and the second was at Llanbadarn Fawr. They also provided a Christmas entertainment for the residents of Hafan y Waun. Thank you to all the young singers who took part and the brass instrumentalists who accompanied them.

Christmas Concert at the Great Hall

Just two days after their return from their Christmas Concert Tour, Penglais musicians all came together to give an excellent concert in the Great Hall on the 13th December. The concert featured the remarkable talent of Penglais musicians with 150 or more students taking part.

The Junior Singers gave a rousing performance of their show 'GEL' and both Senior and Junior string and brass players provided commendable performances of a wide range of music. Fine performances were given by solo instrumentalists and singers. The Senior Choir gave committed performances of music, ranging from traditional Welsh Christmas Carols through to a medley from the show 'Guys and Dolls'. They also including a first performance of a carol written by a past Penglais music student - Ruth Morris. Ruth had been awarded the first prize in the Young Composer of Dyfed

and we felt honoured to give the first performance of her carol 'Lullay Lulla' in the concert. 'Freefall' have been in the forefront of Penglais performance and composition work throughout the year and it was a pleasure to enjoy their performances in the concert and at the Prize Giving evening. It was good to perform to a large and appreciative audience in the Great Hall - thank you to all Penglais parents, relatives, friends and colleagues who supported us on the evening.





End of term Carol Services

The traditional end to the Autumn Term took the form of two Carol Services on the last morning at Llanbadarn Church for Junior and Senior students. Once again Penglais musicians enriched the occasion with their music and particular thanks go to sixth form students who came in especially to support the choir.

National Children's Orchestra of Great Britain

Congratulations to Phoebe Williams and Ruth Dingle who have recently been selected to play in the National Children's Orchestra of Great Britain.

Spring Term musical activities

A full rehearsal schedule is already underway this term with several performances planned. A warm invitation is extended to all Penglais students who would like to join in with any of our vocal or instrumental groups. Details of rehearsal times can be found on the door of D2 or if you prefer, come to see Mrs. Leggett in D2.

Important dates for Penglais musicians

- Thursday 28th February - Eisteddfod Gylch yr Urdd
- Thursday 6th March - Entertainment for the Waun Retirement Club
- THURSDAY 13th March - Performance at WALES MILLENNIUM CENTRE, CARDIFF
- Friday 14th March - Urdd County Eisteddfod at Penglais
- TUESDAY 18th March - MUSIC FOR YOUTH at PENGLAIS
- WEDNESDAY 19th March - SCHOOL SPRING CONCERT - School Main Hall, 7.30 pm



Candles and Carols - Llanbadarn Church and the final morning Carol Services

It is a tribute to Penglais musicians that they did not hesitate to come forward once again to perform at the evening of Candles and Carols at Llanbadarn Church, raising £320 for the Welsh Air Ambulance. This was a delightful evening which saw not only the Junior and Senior Choirs, readers and instrumentalists taking part but also a lovely performance given by the Penglais Staff Choir. It was a real pleasure to hear all the performers - students, past students and staff, join together to sing the final items.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

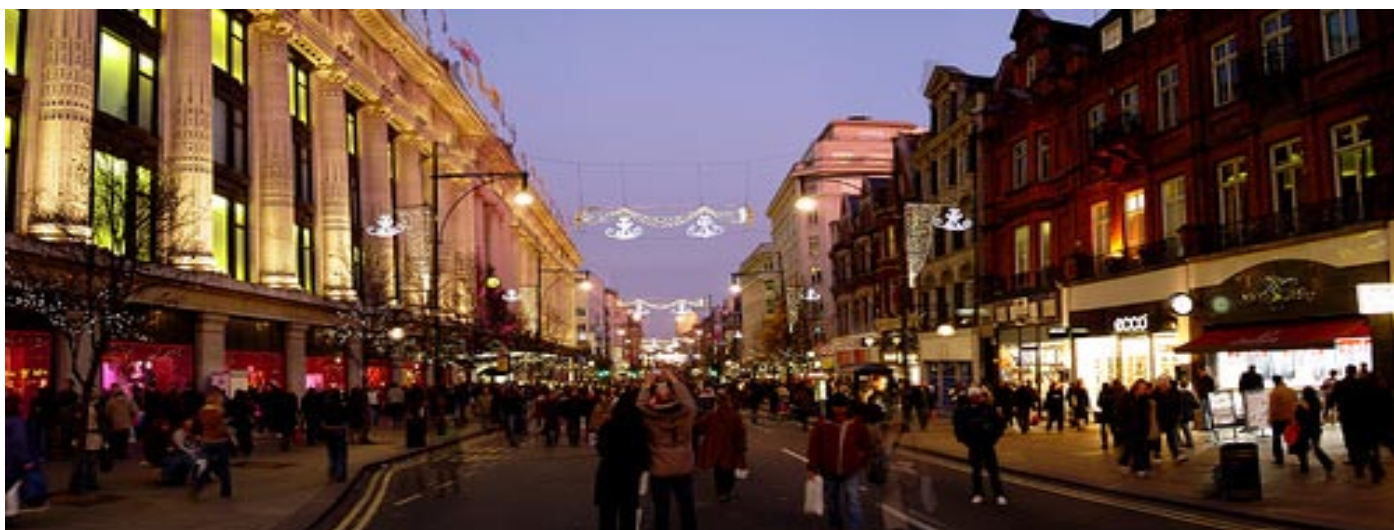
Swimming - On 21st January Penglais relay team competed in the final of the Urdd swimming gala at Wales National Pool in Swansea. The team comprised of Owen Morgan Year 8, Luke Roberts Year 8, Mark Howard Year 7 and Ben Jones Year 7. They achieved an excellent second place and all boys received medals. Congratulations to them all.

Ben Jones 7CP recently competed against entrants from all over Britain in the New Year Dragon Swimming Meet at the National Pool, Swansea which was held over three days. Ben qualified for this event by successfully achieving the strict qualifying times necessary. He achieved several personal best times, reaching the final in two events. Overall Ben had a very successful weekend, achieving some very respectable times for an eleven year old which will be forwarded to the Welsh and British Rankings. Well done Ben.

Trampolining – Penglais School came third in the Welsh Schools Trampolining competition in the U15 girls novice section. The team was made up of Laura Blakemore, Megan Northover, Katie Goodwin and Rebecca Westbury. Peter Goodwin came also came third overall in the U13 Boys Elite competition. Rhian Davies came 9th and Karen Jones came 16th in the U13 girls novice competition. All of these pupils attend the trampolining club at the Leisure Centre run by Joan Morgan. Congratulations to all of you.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - LONDON TRIP

On Thursday 29th November Mr Stovell led a party of 33 pupils to London. The busy itinerary began with a visit to Regent’s Park Mosque on Friday morning, and was followed with a visit to the Imperial War Museum, where pupils found out a lot more about the Holocaust, in the Museum’s moving and thought-provoking exhibition. The party then went to the London Tibetan Buddhist Centre in Lambeth Gardens, where pupils were taught, and practised ancient meditation techniques. The day was rounded off with some free time on Oxford Street, where pupils could enjoy the lights and do some Christmas shopping. On Saturday morning the first visit was to the magnificent Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Neasden, where pupils went round a very informative display about the Hindu faith, and experienced a short service. It was then on to Southall to the Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha, where a guided tour was provided. Saturday evening began with a short tour around Covent Garden, before going to the Lyceum, for a performance of the Lion King. Stalls seats had been arranged, and the pupils were seated by the aisles from where the characters appeared. On Sunday morning Mr Jones finished his free commentary tour of London, and then all pupils attended the main Catholic mass at Westminster Cathedral, before starting the journey home. All members of staff wish to thank the pupils for their exemplary behaviour, coping with the usual London traffic jams, as well as a sickness bug and heavy rain just about every time we got off the coach. Although the trip was very tiring, and a lot had been packed into a short time, the pupils had gained a lot from the trip, and it is intended to run the trip again next year.



SCIENCE

Fifty Year 8–10 pupils have taken part in a Forensics workshop presented by a police officer with real scene of the crime forensics experience. Pupils were presented with a mock crime scene and worked together to analyse lots of evidence including finger prints, foot prints, DNA profiles and various stains in order to unravel the mystery and identify the murderer. Congratulations to them for correctly solving the crime.

The Science department would like to thank Protherics UK Ltd for their kind donation of two Dell computers.

The last WWAYS Science lecture of the year was ‘Musical Squares’ an adventure in sound at Aberystwyth University on 18th January. It was attended by pupils from Years 10-13.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

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| Thursday 29th January | Parents’ meeting with Registered Inspector in the Main Hall at 6.30pm |
| Wednesday 30th January | Year 11 Parents’ Evening at 3.30pm |
| Thursday 7th February | Year 7 Parents’ Evening at 3.30pm |
| Monday 11th – Friday 15th February | HALF TERM |
| Monday 18th February | INSET DAY. School closed to pupils |
| Tuesday 19th February | Year 9 Vocational Options talk 7.30pm |
| Wednesday 20th February | Year 9 Options talk at 7.30 pm |
| Thursday 21st February | Penglais at Work Option talk at 4.30pm |
| Thursday 28th February | Year 9 Parents’ Evening at 7.30pm |
| Thursday 6th March | Year 10 Parents’ Evening at 7.30pm |
| Friday 7th March | INSET day. School closed to pupils PTA Curry and Quiz Night at 7.30pm (sponsored by the SHILAM restaurant) more details to follow. |
| Thursday 13th March | Year 12 Parents’ Evening at 3.30pm |
| Thursday 20th March | END OF TERM |

COLOUR
Penglais Newsletter

View the newsletter in
full colour on the
school website