



FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER

Headteacher's welcome

By now we have become familiar in dealing with the unfamiliar and trying our best to make the most of the situations we find ourselves in. Little did we anticipate, before the Christmas holidays, that we would be teaching and learning online for this half term. Whilst it is certainly not the preferred way of working, I hope that you will agree that we have moved on leaps and bounds since the first lockdown.

Firstly, thank you to you as parents and guardians for everything you are doing to support your child in learning from home. We appreciate that everyone is working under different circumstances and everyone with their own challenges to address. Thank you for ensuring that your child is attending the online lessons, participating as much as possible and completing as much work as possible. We hope that the slightly shorter lessons and coordinated break and lunchtime has helped improved organisation in your household.

On the whole, students have been responding well with many keeping up with the work, responding well through chat and uploading their assignments. However, using cameras is not a popular choice in the 6th form! Something for us to keep working on. Some students have found it hard to upload work into assignments in a way that is accessible for teachers. Please encourage them to communicate with their teachers and ensure that they find a way to share their work. It may be worth over the next few days making sure that they have uploaded all the work that they have done this half term so that the teachers have a clear idea of what the children have achieved since January.

Teachers have also been working hard to try to find ways to engage students and ensuring that they can make as much progress as possible. They have been experimenting with different ways of using the chat function; using different channels so that students can discuss work in smaller groups and finding ways for students to be able to upload their work effectively. Teaching Assistants have been supporting students in the classes both online and in the hub, and support staff have been contacting homes to support students and families in being able to access the online lessons and even delivering resources to homes where needed. Every member of staff has played their part in the system to try to ensure that everyone can work successfully during this period – thank you to everyone.

Unfortunately, we don't yet know when students will be able to return to school. However, I do know that we are certainly looking forward to welcoming students back as soon as possible. In the meantime, next week is half term and I suggest that we all have as much fresh air and exercise and be away from the screens as possible during the week! Have a good week.

ICT Helpdesk details

During this period of online learning you may encounter ICT issues and we want to allow all students and parents a prompt and effective way of dealing with these issues. If you require support with any ICT enquiries please call the County ICT helpdesk on **01970 633678**.

If you require a new login/password for your hwb account then please email the school on admin@penglais.org.uk and we will arrange this. Similarly, if you have any log in concerns relating to Parentmail or ParentPay, these will also need to be sent to admin@penglais.org.uk

Website

In November last year we launched our new website. We hope that the information we have provided is of use to students and parents. All letters that are sent out by Parentmail are uploaded to the website, under the Communications heading, along with all videos and webinars that have been held.

If you have any other requests for information that you would like to be added to the website we would be grateful if you could contact Mrs Helena Clements, PA to the Headteacher on admin@penglais.org.uk as we value your opinions and want to make this website work for everyone.



Rotary Club Donation

Aberystwyth rotary club are running a 'Laptops for home learning' initiative. As part of this scheme, people can donate any laptops to the rotary club, who then clear the hard drive, refurbish the laptop and donate it to school. The laptops will be allocated to families to support students with their online work.

The project is being led by John Bradshaw, from Aberystwyth Rotary club, and if any businesses or individuals have laptops they can donate to this scheme please contact abergarth@gmail.com.



Picture of Ms Hughes, Head teacher, Mr Jones, Senior Leader and Mr Bradshaw (centre) from Rotary.

Donations to School

We have received two donations of ICT equipment from local people who wanted to help our school. A student from Aberystwyth University has kindly donated a laptop and case as she has recently purchased a new laptop.

Another local resident has kindly donated a Kindle Fire to the school for use by our students. Once the ICT equipment has been upgraded by our ICT department these will be utilised by our students and we are very grateful for these generous donations.

Thank you from the DT faculty

Mrs Hague would like to say a very big thank you to parents/guardians of Year 9 and Year 10 students for providing ingredients for practical lessons. It has meant that skills have been developing and students get a break from sitting at the computer.

SIXTH FORM NEWS - EARLY ENTRY UNIVERSITY OFFERS

The University of Cambridge and Oxford have now released their conditional offers. We would like to congratulate all 13 students who applied from Penglais and worked diligently on every area that forms a part of the application process. Oxbridge select students based on a number of criteria such as a student's academic standards (GCSEs, AS grades, predicted grades, subject specific entry exam results), personal statement and reference. Renowned for their rigorous academic standards, Oxbridge shortlisted 11 out of 13 Penglais students for interviews. It is a huge achievement to be invited for an interview and all of our students have benefited from this experience. We are delighted that four students have achieved a mixture of conditional and unconditional offers:

- Carys - Oxford reading English and History in Pembroke College**
- Eleanor - Cambridge reading Education and Psychology in Queens' College**
- Cerianne - Cambridge reading Veterinary Science in Magdalene College**
- Emily - Cambridge reading Mathematics in Pembroke College**

The Sixth Form team would like to thank all staff, parents and members of the local community who have encouraged our students' aspirations and have actively supported them in applying for their chosen courses and institutions. We are delighted by the number and quality of offers that are now being received, making all their hard work worthwhile.



Music News

Four students from Ysgol Penglais School have recently successfully auditioned to be part of the National Youth Choir of Wales. The four pupils are alto Tesni (17), soprano Lucille (18), alto Lucy (17) and alto Matilda (18). They will be joining the choir for a day of digital sectional rehearsals in February, ahead of a residency at Trinity St David in late August. This will precede a short concert tour series around Wales, culminating in a performance at the Dora Stoutzker Hall in Cardiff.

The National Youth Choir of Wales will be conducted in 2021 by Tim Rhys Evans MBE (of 'Only Boys Aloud' fame). He will be leading the choir, which will be made up of the best of young singers from across Wales, in singing a wide repertoire, including the world premiere of a choral piece by composer Nathan James Dearden.

The four Penglais students auditioned via Zoom, competing against many other young singers across Wales. The audition involved sight-singing tests, technical studies and being able to demonstrate singing intervals.

The National Youth Choir of Wales will be performing a special gala concert on 2nd September 2021 at Ffwrnes Theatre in Llanelli, followed by a concert at the Prichard-Jones Hall in Bangor on 3rd September. The tour will finish with a grand performance at the Dora Stoutzker Hall at the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama in Cardiff on 4th September.

Fund raising activities

Movember Charity

Mr Matthew Hughes (Year 9 Leader) and his friend from University ran 12km every day in January, a total of 84km a week to raise awareness for the 84 men who take their own lives every week. Between them, they raised £3,268 for the Movember charity. Congratulations to Mr Hughes and his friend for their fantastic donation to a worthy cause.

Cancer Research UK

Some of our staff are raising money by challenging themselves to run 56 miles over February. This can be done any way you like (e.g. 2 miles a day or several longer runs each week), indoor, outdoor - you decide. If you would like to take part in this please keep us posted on your progress!

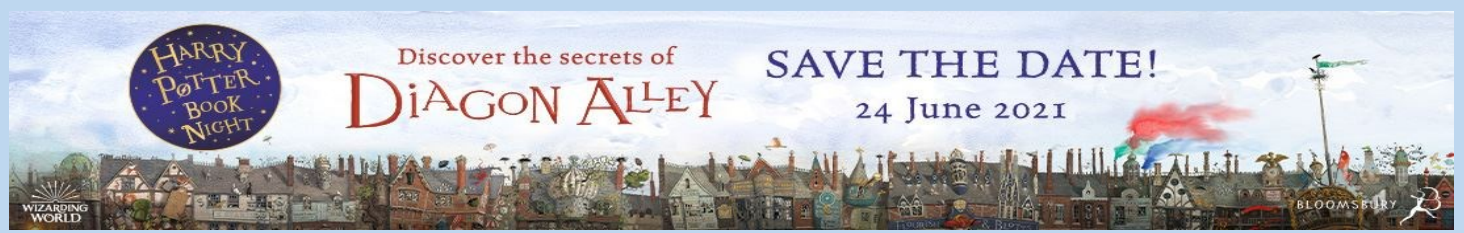
[Run 56 Miles Challenge - FAQs | Cancer Research UK](#)

Biology News

In January our A level Biology and Geography students were given the opportunity to attend a virtual lecture about exploration and microbial diversity at the poles. Dr. Anne Jungblut from the Natural History Museum talked about her adventures sampling microbes in the Arctic and the Antarctic, including the logistics of getting there and back on military planes and ships, and how the field stations deal with human waste.

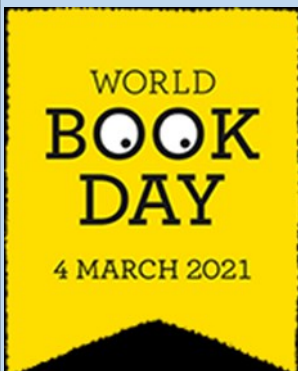
Dr. Jungblat's research involves producing DNA profiles of the microorganisms she and her colleagues collect so that they can monitor biodiversity in these extreme environments. The good news is that the microbes found in the Antarctic today are the same as the strains of microbes that Scott sampled in his expeditions over a hundred years ago – there is no sign of humans having accidentally introduced new species there during subsequent expeditions. Dr. Jungblat was able to make the comparison as Scott's samples are amongst the vast collection of 80 million specimens looked after by the Natural History Museum in London. The profiles will now act as a baseline to monitor how microbial life in the Antarctic changes in the future.

The lecture was part of the British Phycological Society 2021 Conference hosted by Nottingham University. Thanks to Dr. Jessica Adams from IBERS, Aberystwyth university for inviting Penglais sixth form students. The talk is available on you tube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smTdNmV5Q8> if anyone would like to find out more.



Harry Potter Book Day celebrations took place this time last year in the school Library. This year the celebrations have been delayed until June; when hopefully we will be able to celebrate again.

In the meantime Bloomsbury Publishing have a whole range of activities and resources available for those Harry Potter fans who cannot wait that long. Find out more at <https://harrypotter.bloomsbury.com/uk/fun-stuff/>



WORLD BOOK DAY – 4th March 2021

Share a Story, Author and Illustrator Academy, free audio books, video books, activities and reading recommendations can all be found at <https://www.worldbookday.com>

Look at for special events in the first week of March. The £1 book token is now available in digital format as attached for single use. Please print and take to your local book supplier for your free £1 book

**Our £1
books
line-up
for 2021**

