

Dolygaer Outdoor Pursuits Centre Residential

Ysgol Ty Coch

On tour

March 2011



Team:

Kayleigh Owen
Bethan Jones
Leir Rocket
Natasha Stone
Damien Larkin
Dominic Abraham

Tyler Morgan
Terry Hares
Josh Baggs
Jason Franklin
James Evans
Christopher Caulfield

Support:

Aron (vomiting) Bradley (withdrawn)
Chris (Gollum) Myhill

Karen (last minute replacement) Pitman
Ashlie (now I'm getting anxious) Holland

Day 1 Tuesday

We all arrived bright eyed and bushy tailed in the school hall, bags packed and smiles on our faces. We had to wait a little while for Terry to complete his Science exam but were soon on the road just after 10.00a.m. The sun was shining, there wasn't a cloud in the sky and with Take That on the CD player we sang our hearts out all the way up the A470.

One of the great things about Dolygaer was it's on our doorstep. It took about 45 minutes and we arrived in Pontsticill, it then took almost an hour to find the centre!! Mr Bradley was navigating and his idea of navigation is saying 'stop and ask the next person' poor Ashlie there was hardly a sheep in sight let alone a person. Mr Myhill came to our rescue with a telephone call and some sensible suggestions. We managed to get the centre at 11.15 a.m.

Now talk about thrown in the deep end, by 12.15 we had made our own packed lunch, put our rucksacks in our rooms, got kit from the stores and were setting off on our very first activity:

Gorge walking.



What a walk it turned out to be, the scenery was stunning, for a few of us we felt like we were in Lord of the Rings land, especially with Mr Myhill doing Gollum impressions! The trees were dense and draped with a mossy green covering which gave the appearance of being magical. It was a tough walk and involved crawling up through a tunnel on our hands and knees and dropping down into a pool of water from a small waterfall. It was awesome, we had a great time, everyone got involved and worked well as a team helping each other and encouraging. Thoroughly filthy and wet at the end, we headed straight into the showers and some warm dry clothes. Our wet clothes we had to put in the drying room for tomorrows activities.

We had to volunteer to help with tea and so Leir & Kayleigh stepped up and helped to serve dinner which was spicy chicken pasta, there was loads of it and seconds too. This was followed by a gorgeous chocolate brownie with custard or cream. We needed it after the walk.

We had a little time to ourselves now to set our clothes and rooms straight, then some socialising with the students from Heronsbridge School and a DVD. Hot chocolate and biscuits for supper and a fairly early night to our rooms where we spent a long time chatting and laughing!!

Day 2 Wednesday

Up bright and early at least some of us were! Mr Bradley had become ill during the night and the decision was made that he needed to go home. (See what an afternoon of physical exertion does to a P.E teacher) Mr Myhill had been kept awake all night with the vomiting and after taking his temp. a replacement was called in the form of Karen Pitman.

So while we ate our lovely breakfast of cereal with lashings of toast, Mr Bradley was taken home by his Dad and just after, in time for the first activity, Mrs Hodges arrived with Karen.

We walked down the hill from the centre to the reservoir, where we were going canoeing. It was glorious sunshine but we had to wear waterproofs and life savers and it was just as well because the water was freezing. We had to share 4 to a canoe with an adult in each one, and then we tied two canoes together so we were paddling as an 8. Wow this was a hard problem to solve, who paddled when and on which side, we had to cross the reservoir and go under the bridge and it was very difficult to stop going around in circles. Tyler was extraordinary at the rowing, was a great ship's Captain and kept us afloat and going in the right direction most of the time. Dominic spent most of the trip sitting in the bottom of the boat gentle dipping his paddle and clonking Ashlie with it but, when we tied all eight canoes together Dom was the first volunteer to run across all eight to the other side!! Terry Hares was next to run the line, followed by Damien.

After canoe a little further down we made for shore and some well earned lunch that we had made before we left. It was great to sit in the sun having worked hard eating the sandwiches we had made and drinking hot chocolate made on the Trangia and Kelly kettle.

The afternoon saw a fierce battle take place; well it was more like a scene from Pirates of the Caribbean, without Johnny Depp. A good soaking was the order of the day and an energetic chase around the reservoir paddling canoes like there was no tomorrow. After a hard fought battle Mr Myhill's canoe was floundering in the water and we had to rescue them before they sank, this of course meant tipping Mr M into the water!

After this we headed back to shore and began to pack up, this was hard work, emptying the canoes stowing away all very tired, still the sun carried on shining and we made good progress and got a swim in the reservoir after.

A long trudge back up the hill followed by a hot shower and bangers and mash for tea, served this evening by Tyler and Damien. We then headed off to the bright lights of Asda to do some shopping.

We arrived back in time to watch a Scooby Doo movie, chat with our friends and generally chill out.



Day 3 Thursday

A little lie in today as not more than 2 people were up before 7.00am. Today was exciting but anxious for some as we had decided last night we wanted to go rock climbing. This was a new activity for most of us and we didn't know what to expect.

After a good breakfast we made our packed lunches and met at the stores to be kitted out in our climbing gear. We were each given a bag into this we had to put our climbing harness, helmet, packed lunch. Some of us were then given some extra's to carry such as carabiners and ropes. We were taken in the centre mini bus to Morlais and then had a short walk to the climbing plateaux.

The scenery was amazing we could see all over the valley and down into Merthyr and beyond we had a fabulous view of Pen y Fan in the Beacons. We were given a safety talk by the instructor and had to wear our helmets at all times. We were strapped into our climbing harness's and taken to the rock face. It was fairly high but most of us chose to try it out. We had a lot of encouragement from the instructors, Karen & Mr Myhill were belaying, Ashlie was filming and shouting encouragement.

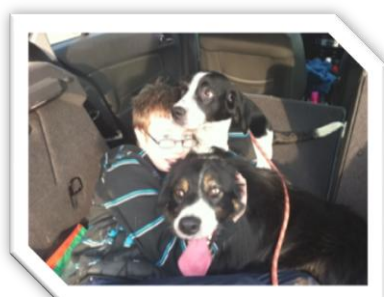
It was amazing, some of us got a little scared but many of us, Baggsy, Dom, Terry, Kayleigh, Natasha, James, Damien, Jason, made it to the top. Tyler did extremely well to overcome his nerves and go half way. Chris overcame a problem with his boots and a nasty slip, by borrowing the instructor's boots and making it to the top on the 2nd attempt. Karen also made the top closely followed by Mr M. Ashlie was a little anxious, she is no good with heights! That made us all laugh.



We travelled back to the centre and got our kit put away, there was just enough time for a drink and a breather before we were off for a 'wild walk'

Our instructors took us out into the surrounding woodland and we had to find and follow trails. It was great watching the staff crawling under bushes and up hills. We had to choose the route and think about how best to manage, there was some great team work involved and Ty Coch were out there leading the whole way. It was hot and the walk was not an easy one but the fun and bonding that took place was wonderful.

At the end of the walk as we made our way back we had some visitors, Mrs Fisher & Zoe had brought their dogs and some very welcome chocolate and crisps. We very proudly showed them around our rooms and told them about our adventures so far. We had a great game of ball with Moss and Scooby.



Day 4 Friday

Last night after a great meal of chicken curry rice & chips, followed by gateaux, we had packed all our belongings away, now we had to bring them down and load the bus ready for the trip home. All the rooms needed to be cleaned and checked and any clothes left in the drying rooms to be packed.

After we had packed the bus, eaten breakfast and made packed lunch for the day we set off into the woods around the reservoir. We had taken some tarpaulin, ropes and we had to split into teams to make our very own shelters (bivouac). The shelter had to cover us all and look good too!

They looked really good they were finished and we were able to sit inside and have a drink. We then played some woodland games, hunter/hunted, squirrels and acorns. This involved a lot of running and hiding so we were more than happy to settle down for some lunch and hot chocolate in our handmade shelters.

After lunch we packed up all the equipment and took a walk along the reservoir beach edge, skimming pebbles, clambering over rocks and finding our way back up to the road. It was afternoon and time for us to be leaving, so with a little sadness we said goodbye to Andrew, Matt, Hywel and Simon from the centre, then to all our new friends from Heronsbridge.

It had been a great week, hard work sometimes scary but always full of fun. Every one of us tried our very best, got along, made friends, helped out, were a credit to our parents and great ambassadors for Ysgol Ty Coch.

We had missed Mr Bradley but Karen was wonderful and took his place well. Mr Myhill showed us his Bear Grylls side, or as we called him 'flame grill' side and kept us in stitches (the laughing kind).

We sang and sang all the way back to Ty Coch, our rendition of 'Shine' was an absolute joy!!

So to end in the words of 'Take That' - 'Shine' we most certainly did.

*So come on, so come on, get it on
Don't know what you're waiting for
Your time is coming don't be late, hey hey
So come on
See the light on your face
Let it shine
Just let it shine
Let it shine
~ Take That*

Film footage and photographs to follow