

PENCELLI
By Spike Hastings

All I would say about Pencelli is that it isn't a holiday; it requires: effort, strength and lots of teamwork. Here am I am going to tell you my favourite moments while I was away in the South of Wales.

Location: Hardenhuish Field

It was 2 o'clock. It was time for me to leave my house and make my way to the coach. I stepped outside into the fluffy snow with my suitcase trailing along behind me. I piled it into the car, shut the door and put my seat belt on. As we were driving along, all of a sudden, I felt really nervous; I was thinking what if I wasn't strong enough both physically and mentally. We soon arrived. I saw Greg standing with some of my other friends. I gave my mum a quick hug and said 'goodbye' and went over to them. It was now 2:30; time to get onto the coach; I sat next to Greg on the way there. I thought '2 hours until we are there, 2 hours until fun.'

Location: Plas Pencelli (Wales)

We had finally arrived. On the right-hand side of the coach there was a trailer. We piled our bags and suitcases onto it and it drove off. Sir told us we had a short walk until we got there. We walked up a short path and in front of us were two large gates and above them said 'Plas Pencelli'. We were greeted by Cilla (one of the instructors) she told us what room we were all staying in, it was only then it really kicked in what was lying ahead of me; a whole week of challenges and excitement. We all took our bags up to our rooms; I accidentally took the wrong bag and had to walk back down the stairs to swap the bag for mine (sorry Lily!). Now that I finally had the correct bag, I unpacked all my things into the drawers under the bed. Next, we had to make our beds; everyone in my room struggled to put the correct things where they belong but sooner rather than later it was all done.

Location: Caves

It was now Day 2, we were all feeling excited to do our first activity, caving. I had mixed emotions when I heard that we were doing this: I was feeling excited because it was something I had never done before and worried because I don't really enjoy tight spaces. We had just done our briefing and were getting things ready. I was wearing: 3 tops, 1 jumper, 1 coat, a thermal skin and some joggers - I wasn't intending to get cold! We got into the minibus and set off on our 30-minute journey towards the caves. When we arrived the instructor, Henry told us we had another 30-minute journey but this time it was on foot. On our way we saw many sheep, cows and wild horses. Then we finally arrived at the caves and we all put our 'waterproof' overalls on. We then soon went inside this mysterious cave. As we came in, there was a narrow passage we had to pass through. Just as we came out of that passage there was the main chamber. There were many bats and lots of limestone; Sir told us how it was formed. After an hour of caving we stopped for a quick lunch break. I had a delicious ham and salad roll with a bag of crisps and a Kit Kat. We soon went back in. We climbed through many tight caves, passages and streams. But now was time for the most challenging of them all. We had to go through a small passage about 30cm high about 20m long. Me, Mr Craig and Greg went at the back. When we had finally got through there were many waterfalls and ladders leading up to mysterious places. It was now time to head back home and just relax after a long day of adventuring.

Location: River Usk

It was now Day 3 and we were all getting used to Pencelli. I slept much better that night because I was extremely tired from the activity the day before. I went down to breakfast; it was: sausage, hash browns and beans. I devoured them quickly and went along to the briefing. Today we were doing canoeing. I was so excited. Sir told us all we needed to know, and we then set off for the River Usk. 10 minutes later, we had arrived, and I was buzzing with excitement. We unloaded out canoes into the

river and paired ourselves up. I was with Greg and Cole. Sir was showing us how to steer and paddle. Once we got the hang of it we set down stream. 30 minutes of canoeing passed, and we stopped for a lunch break. Once again, I had a ham roll and some crisps. After lunch, we set off for some rapids. Our canoe went at the back, just behind Miss Leafe's and Jack's one. Time flew past and it was already 3 o'clock and time to leave. To the right of the river was a canal. We all wanted to jump in as we were all still dry. Me, Miss Leafe, Ben, Greg, Izzy, Alex and Olly all jumped in. someone gave us a countdown. 1...2...3 'SPLASH!' we all jumped in. It was only when we climbed out, we realised that we still had a 30 minutes' drive being soaked. But it was worth It.

These were some of my favourite moments about Pencelli but there were many more. I learned that I need to push myself more. More importantly, I need to listen more. Pencelli was a wonderful experience and I am extremely glad that I went. I would like to thank all the staff for letting us have this opportunity.