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**DATES FOR YOUR
2010 DIARY:**

**Open Gardens
Monday 30 August**

**Summer Fete
CANCELLED**

100 Club

Recent winners were Olive Oliver (April), John O'Sullivan (May) and Sue Wroe (June).

Summer Fete and Summer Draw

Sadly we are having to cancel our Summer Fete this year, following a bereavement in the family of the key organiser. We are, however, running our traditional 'Summer Draw' to help raise money for the Centre. First prize is £100 OR a full board weekend for two at Ammerdown. The draw tickets cost £1 each. We are hoping that you will again help sell tickets and enclose a five ticket book (more available on request via the response form). All cheques and counterfoils to be returned by 3rd September, please.

A big Thank You!

Thanks to your generosity, we have been able to offer heavily discounted places to three people – one Christian, one Jew and one Muslim – to take part in our 2010 Three Faiths Summer School. They would otherwise not have been able to come, so we and they are very grateful for your support. The Summer School is taking place this month (i.e. July), so will be covered more fully in our next newsletter.

Can you help?

We are so grateful for your support in recent years, in response to needs mentioned in our newsletters – from replacing our cutlery to refurbishing our lounge chairs. **Thank You so much!** Our next project is to replace the carpet in the Chapel. The current one sadly shows its age, with threadbare bits and multiple wax stains. Our household staff have worked wonders for years at removing these stains, but even they now have to admit defeat – and it does not look good for such a spiritual place. A brand new carpet will cost between £800 and £1,200, depending on quality. If you are able to help, any gift, however small, will be gratefully received.



The Ammerdown Centre



Newsletter

July 2010

“Anger breeds anger. That is what killed our son, and it would destroy our family if I let it.”

How would you react if your 16 year old son was murdered by another youth in a pique of rage – as experienced to Barry and Margaret Mizen in May 2008? They came to Ammerdown on 1st June to share their story.

Those of us privileged enough to hear them were spellbound: here were two people who, up to two years ago, were getting on with their life in a very ordinary way – a life centered around family (they had 9 children), church and work. These days, they are giving talks around the country, are involved in campaigns such as The Forgiveness Project (see photo), Kids Taskforce, South London Citizens and CitySafe Campaign. They have also set up a foundation in Jimmy's name (www.jimmymizen.org).

What struck me most when listening to Margaret and Barry was the lack of anger and bitterness: huge sadness, yes – but no anger. Margaret is in no doubt that this is thanks to God's grace. On the day after Jimmy's death, Margaret and Barry were stopped by the media when coming out of church. Put on the spot, in deep shock from the events of the previous day, Margaret felt moved to ask for prayers for the parents of the boy, and ask that they should be left alone, “as it was not their fault”. Thanks to the power of modern media, her words travelled the world. They had an enormous impact on all who heard or read them – including myself, who felt deeply moved.

Barry and Margaret are showing us the way – not only speaking against hate and violence, but walking the talk. And they are challenging each one of us, saying that we are all responsible for a society in which such awful things can happen, and that lasting change will only come if we put compassion and love before anger and violence. Change can indeed happen, but only if we all ‘walk the talk’, just as Barry and Margaret do.

With best wishes,

PS. Attached as a loose insert is a more detailed synopsis of Margaret and Barry's talk, written by a Friend of Ammerdown present that evening.



Thumbs up for Ammerdown!

Ammerdown received top ratings after 31 pupils from local school St Louis stayed overnight. The thank you letters repeatedly mention the 'yummy' food as well as the 'luxurious' bedrooms. Here are some extracts:

The rooms were like something out of a dream with the bedside tables, lamps and biscuits. I also liked the way you got the bathroom in! (Olivia)

The food was amazing! The lasagne was better than my Mum's and, believe me or not, my Mum worked as a professional cook and you are the first people who are better at cooking than my Mum. (Peter)

Thank you so much for letting us use the Chapel. We sat in a circle whilst holding candles. It was a very reverent and peaceful time. You could feel that you were in the presence of God. (Ana)



Focus on Jewish Christian Relations

As long-term supporters will know, better understanding between Christians and Jews has always been a special focus of Ammerdown's work. This is in no small part thanks to the Sisters of Zion, who helped run the Centre for over 30 years and who have a special ministry in Jewish Christian dialogue.

One lasting legacy from the Sisters is our annual Jewish Christian Summer School, which brings Christians and Jews together to study sacred texts and share their faith experience. It used to be run by CCJ (the Council of Christians and Jews) but is now run by Ammerdown, with the help of Sr Margaret Shepherd and Rabbi Mark Solomon, both Trustees of Ammerdown.

Sr Margaret (see photo) explains: "As followers of Jesus, Christians cannot understand who they are unless they understand Jesus as a Jew. Our courses help Christians to appreciate anew the Jewishness of Jesus and therefore the very roots of their faith. Importantly, they also deepen friendship between Jews and Christians.

The topics that are chosen are always relevant to both Jews and Christians, and we consider them from both faith perspectives. We combine academic rigour with plenty of group discussions and socialising, which helps foster appreciation of the richness of our respective faith traditions."

The 2010 Summer School [Study Weekend and Week] will take place from 27 August to 3 September. There are still places available. For more information, visit our website or use the response form to request flyers.



Taking Care of the Centre's Spiritual Foundation

We are delighted to report that our colleague Sarah, who, for the last two and half years, has been in charge of publicity and marketing, has recently taken on additional responsibilities for the 'spiritual dimension' of Ammerdown.

As a former sister of the Holy Family of Sainte Emilie de Rodat, trained in spiritual accompaniment and an experienced liturgist, Sarah is well placed to take a lead in developing and nurturing Ammerdown's spiritual heart.

Sarah says: "One of my favourite quotes is from John O'Donohue "May you experience each day as a sacred gift woven around the heart of wonder". This is my wish for all who visit or come to spend time here at Ammerdown, whatever their reason".

With Sarah's help, we will continue to hold prayer services in the Chapel every morning and evening, to which all guests are welcome. These times are very precious. As one visitor recently said: "I came here for physical rest, not expecting my soul to be refreshed too!".



Carers' Days as popular as ever

Our regular 'Pampering Days for Carers' continue to be a huge success with hard-pressed carers. One lady attended her first ever day in April and wrote afterwards to express her appreciation. "I am a carer for my husband who is not only getting worse but is also now almost blind. I had never been to Ammerdown but was



bullied (!) by a friend to attend one of your Carers' Days. I am so glad I did! Everything was lovely – the relaxation session, the craft corner, the massage, the food... Please thank all the people who gave us such an enjoyable and relaxing day. shall be back as soon as I can, if you have me!

Our Carers' Days are heavily subsidised by Ammerdown, as we know that most carers live on benefits and have little spare money. This is made possible thanks to the financial support given by our supporters, so a big thank you to you all.

Peace Cottage renamed the 'Aldrich Cottage'

At a small ceremony on 28 June 2010, Peace Cottage – our five-bedroom cottage adjacent to the main Centre – was officially renamed 'The Aldrich Cottage' in memory of Andrew Aldrich, who died in December 2008, and his wife Margaret. Andrew was the first Director of the Ammerdown Centre, joining in 1973. Throughout his 13 years at the helm, he worked tirelessly to establish the Centre's financial stability and reputation. The Trustees could think of no better tribute than to rename in his name the cottage where Andrew had lived with his family.

Even more fitting was the fact that it is his son Mark who unveiled the new plaque (he is featured here with Kenneth Wilson, Chair of Ammerdown Trustees). Mark became Ammerdown's 'out of hours' duty manager three years ago, thus continuing the family tradition of having an Aldrich involved at Ammerdown!

