



The Ammerdown Centre
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DATES FOR 2011:

CHRISTMAS LUNCHES AT AMMERDOWN

£19.50 for a four-
course meal

Monday 12 Dec.

Tuesday 13 Dec.

Thursday 14 Dec.

Friday 16 Dec.

Saturday 17 Dec.

Sunday 18 Dec.

Menu available on
our website

100 Club

Recent 100 Club winners were Sue Elliott (August), Sue Harbert (September) and Sue Eames (October).

When Shakespeare came to Ammerdown...

What a superb evening we had on 20 August when open air theatre company Folksy Theatre performed 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' in the gardens of Ammerdown House.

Miraculously the weather stayed fine, and the audience was treated to a brilliant performance enhanced by the beautiful setting of the Orangery, hedges and lawns. The Centre received £222 as a share of the proceeds.



A big Thank You!

We have been once again bowled over by your generosity! In the last newsletter, we asked for help with installing loop systems in the Russell room and the Upper Dovecote. With the help of Gift Aid, we raised a total of £1,400 and we have just paid... £1,350 (incl. VAT) to have the two rooms suitably equipped! Once again, your kindness has enabled us to introduce a much needed improvement, and we would like to thank you all, on behalf of the Centre and of our many guests who struggle with hearing.

Can you help?

Our next project is to replace the small scrappy tables in the bedrooms with 'proper' desks. This would greatly enhance the 'comfort' feel of our bedrooms - not least because so many of our guests work in their room. Desks with drawers would also help increase storage space. We have identified suitable desks for around £50 each and would love to have one in each bedroom. If you are able to help towards this cost, any gift, however small, will as always be gratefully received. **Thank You!**



The Ammerdown Centre



Newsletter

November 2011

"I recently spent time at the Ammerdown Centre which I needed badly being thoroughly tired and in need of friendship and a peaceful time in order to recharge my batteries.

I found such wonderful friendship from the whole community and such healing of a troubled spirit. Having had a stroke, I have some disabilities and weaknesses, and was so relieved to be accepted as I am. I also have a deep faith but I needed a bit of a push plus inspiration, which I found with you all, together with God's wonderful healing love.

God surely lives in this beautiful place. Thank you, all of you, and bless you for all the help and friendship found with you."

(written by private guest Margaret and reproduced with her permission)

It never ceases to both delight and amaze me to see how Ammerdown appears to touch the lives of so many of our visitors. I take no credit for it. I honestly believe that, since the opening of Ammerdown in 1973, there has been a special ingredient here that somehow helps people connect with God's love and healing, whether they purposely look for it or not.

Many guests do indeed comment that Ammerdown is "different". When asked why, they are often at a loss to explain it. They say that it is intangible, something 'in the air' that touches mind, body and spirit. I like to compare it to a well from which springs God's 'living water' (John 4:14).

Like Margaret, I believe that God is at work at Ammerdown. Many feel His touch. Others do not. But if they leave feeling refreshed and soothed, then Ammerdown will have achieved its aim of offering them a haven where they can connect with their soul.

It is a privilege for us who work here, staff and volunteers, to hear from people like Margaret that God uses us, in spite of our frailty and shortcomings, to be a conduit for His love and acceptance. My prayer for 2012 is that God will continue to use Ammerdown to touch the lives of those who come here, irrespective of their reasons for visiting.

With best wishes,



2012 Ammerdown Programme now available

The 2012 Ammerdown programme of courses, retreats and events is now available on our website (www.ammerdown.org) and in print. With over 75 residential and day events on offer, we hope that it will give you plenty of reasons to visit Ammerdown next year.

We have invited back popular course and retreat leaders, such as Margaret Silf, Rabbi Howard Cooper and Fr Daniel O'Leary. Other leaders have never been before but will no doubt make their mark too. For example, Ian Adams (author of 'Monastic Rythms for Contemporary Living') and Mary Jo Radcliffe will make their 'debut' at Ammerdown next year.

Please help us make more people aware of the wonderful courses and retreats that Ammerdown offers. As we all know, a personal recommendation by a friend is by far the best publicity. So please direct your friends to our website or give them a 2012 brochure (you can request multiple copies via the response form). Do also feel free to ask for copies to leave in your church.

Just think of all the new people we could reach if every person receiving this newsletter told at least one friend about Ammerdown!



New faces at Ammerdown

Ammerdown is very fortunate that three new volunteers joined as residents in September: Euan, Simi (short for Simima) and Emelie.

Euan has a professional background in training and is also a published poet, a liturgist and a musician. After many years working with people with special needs and disabilities, he felt called to become more involved in the spiritual side of life. He will be leading Ammerdown's Quiet Days next year as well as several new day events on 'Praying with Music' and 'Write your own Hymn'. Euan is also interested in interfaith and will support the work of Ammerdown in this important area.

Simi has come from another Christian retreat centre, Brunel Manor, in Torquay. She likes helping in the kitchen and has already become an invaluable member of the Ammerdown here. She is also a keen photographer and is the one who took the amazing photo of the honeysuckle which adorns the cover of the 2012 programme (see above).

Emelie came from Sweden to Ammerdown through the charity 'Time for God', which matches overseas students with Christian organisations in the UK. She will be here for one year, improving her English and learning new skills whilst continuing to walk with God. Not that Emelie's English needs much improving - it is so good that she is proving a real Godsend at reception!



A true labour of love...

This is one of these lovely 'behind the scenes' stories that help make Ammerdown the special place it is. In 2000, Methodist Minister Rosemary brought her church to Ammerdown for a Quiet Day. Husband Robert came along and spotted high on a wall in the back garden a large cast iron clock no longer working. Robert who, in his own words, "likes fiddling with things", offered to take a look to see whether he could get the mechanism going again.

Subsequent investigation revealed that it was not a case of a broken mechanism but of a missing mechanism! It turned out that all the workings of the clock had been taken out at some stage in the past to make space for a water tank, now no longer in existence. Undeterred, Robert offered to try and reconstruct the whole mechanism, this time using an electricity driven motor rather than a pendulum. All in his spare time, of course...

Working at a distance from rough measurements did make the task even more difficult BUT, at the third attempt, on 11 November this year, Robert succeeded in getting the clock to work, as the photo shows. Given that the clock had been out of order for well over fifty years, and that Robert had no prior expertise, this is a remarkable achievement. A huge Thank You to Robert, who has spent countless hours on this task over the years and who never gave up. Please do not forget to look at the clock and admire his handiwork when you are next at Ammerdown!



... and an empty threat!

In the last newsletter, we shared with supporters the email sent by the English Defence League (EDL) following our 'Understanding Islam' course in May. In the email, EDL warned us that, if we persisted in holding another 'Understanding Islam' course in November, the EDL would "rally all its members together—10,000 of them - and hold a peaceful protest at the venue, whilst the course is being held." Well, we are glad to report that the course has just taken place with no disruption whatsoever from outsiders! Clearly, it was an empty threat issued in the hope that we would be intimidated and cancel the course. The email, however, totally backfired because it only served to strengthen our resolve...



We are SO grateful for the many messages of support received after the newsletter was sent out. It helped enormously to know that you shared our indignation and determination not to back down. Thank you too for your prayers. We really felt enfolded by your loving concern, which made us all the more determined to make a stand.

Ammerdown catches up with the 21st century

This is just to inform all our supporters that Ammerdown can now process credit and debit card payments. Progress?... We hope so!