

# THE AMMERDOWN TIMES

Autumn 2023

Dear Friends

What a joyful 50th Anniversary Weekend Celebration!

The weekend began with the ringing of the bells – calling us to sit down together in peace – and the Sabbath prayers. Following a delicious Ammerdown supper, Bishop Peter Price, former Bishop of Bath and Wells, inspired us to think about: How is Christ the Hope of the World in our time? Saturday

began with the Ammerdown Story told by Lord Hylton, one of the founders of Ammerdown, the family of his co-founder John Todd, the Sisters of Sion who ran the Centre for thirty years, as well as Trustees, staff and guests from over the years. Richard Reddie, CTBI Director of Justice and Inclusion challenged us with his talk: Windrush@75: addressing the unfinished business of racial justice in church and society, and Rethinking Security, led by Diana Francis, encouraged us to think about the issues Ammerdown might explore going forward. The day was full with creative



crafts, eco-tours of the garden, live music, conversation, delicious food – including a magnificent, Ammerdown baked, birthday cake - and sunshine. On Sunday, Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Jane Sedgman, joined us for two special services. The first an interfaith gathering bringing people from the Jewish, Christian, Islamic, Buddhist and Baha'i faiths together. The

second, an ecumenical service of thanksgiving, bringing people from a wide spectrum of Christian denominations together. At these services, the Ammerdown Centre were welcomed into the Community of the Cross of Nails and Together for Hope by Canon Mary Gregory, Canon for Arts and Reconciliation at Coventry Cathedral, recognising Ammerdown's work in peace and reconciliation. This was a wonderful weekend, celebrating what has been and looking forward to what is to come.



## Time to say goodbye

And, as we look forward, I have made the decision that I will leave Ammerdown at the end of the year. I love Ammerdown and I am passionate about what it stands for. It has been a real privilege to hold this role. However, I believe that it is now time for someone with new energy and fresh ideas to lead it into the next phase.

There is much to do before the end of the year and we do hope that you will join us! The 50th Anniversary Celebrations continue with the visit from Mpho Tutu van Furth and our 70's Evening, not to mention

Christmas and everything in between!

See you soon!  
Warmest wishes  
Christine  
*Lead Manager*

## Four New Trustees!

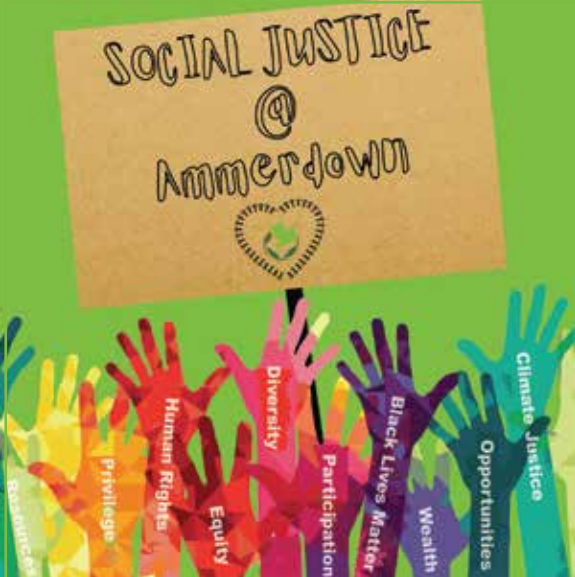
We are delighted to announce that four new Trustees were appointed to the Ammerdown Centre Board of Trustees at the AGM in September. They are: Sue Ball, Diana Jolliffe, John Jolliffe and Narinder Tegally. We look forward to all that they will bring to Ammerdown. Also at the AGM, Tim Chambers stepped down as Trustee after six years of service. We thank Tim for being a strong advocate of Ammerdown and for his commitment and support of the Centre.

## The Bells

Have you noticed the bells hanging outside the dining room? The newly polished plaque says: These bells were presented to Ammerdown in 1987 by Harold L B Meyer to be 'used as dinner gongs as they were in my family homes in Berlin (1922-39) and Stanmore (1939-84)'. They were brought out of Berlin after Kristallnacht when the family fled the persecution of the Nazis. They hang here as a reminder ..... and to call us all to sit down together in peace.







## Social Justice Update

It was a joy to be a part of the Ammerdown celebrations and to witness and participate in both challenging discussions and hopeful dialogue that included social justice topics as a big part of the Ammerdown future. Seeing Ammerdown friends immersed in fond memories, recollecting challenging times and being brave in discussion in our safe environment is a wonder to behold. I was especially delighted that Ukraine friends Sasha, Max and Iryna were able to join us for the weekend.

Several people approached us to express interest in joining the Caring for Creation collective and it would be wonderful to have you join our next Zoom on Wednesday 4th October at 9.30am. Our interrelated work and commitment towards environmental justice is a great project for those keen to work together to save our common home. If you would like to join, please send an email to [social.justice@ammerdown.org](mailto:social.justice@ammerdown.org). Exciting plans are afoot this Autumn, including our very own 'Climate Slummit'. This will be an evening of kind food and films that educate on the climate. In true Ammerdown style, the 24-hour event hopes to find a balance between challenging conversation and creative collaboration and rest and self-care. Ammerdown hopes to become an Arocha partner in 2023. There really is no better time to be involved.

Work with the local community continues in our monthly Cuppa and a chat space. As we approach the shorter days and colder climate, this forum feels especially key to building more active connections and providing an ever-growing support network for those living in the area.

Work with refugees remains at the core of our hospitality and we look forward to opening our space to all refugees in October, as we share food, reconnect, and build new connections. The Centre also looks forward to Rev. Inderjit Bhogal's upcoming course: Hospitality and Sanctuary for All, as we move forward with our intention to become a Centre of Sanctuary, a named place where we provide cultures of welcome, where all refugees and asylum seekers will feel safe.



*The Caring for Creation Collective*  
By Laura Deacon, *Social Justice Initiator*







Shabbat Prayers with Rabbi Rachel Montagu



How is Christ the Hope of the World in our Time? with Bishop Peter Price



The Ammerdown Story Part One



The Ammerdown Story Part Two



Caring for Creation - inspiration to live differently.



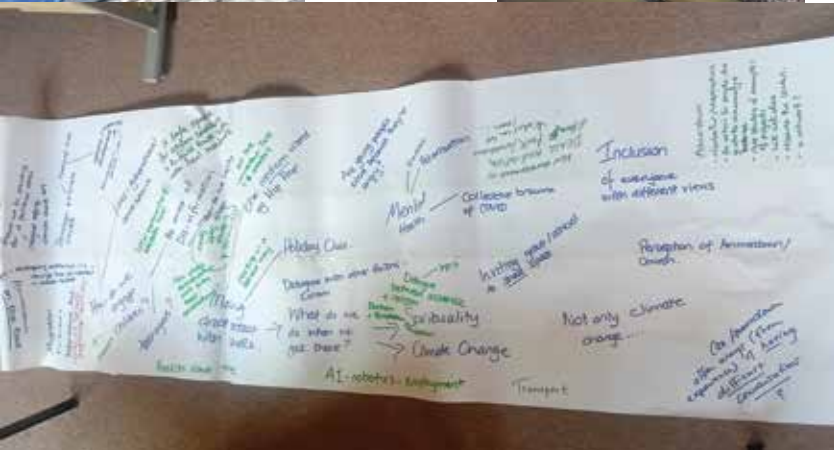
Painting with Bridget



Felt Bowl making with Lynn



Printing with Barbara



What are the new Ammerdown Conversations we might have?



Sinnober, Natalie and Sebastian



Eco Tour with Olly, Ammerdown's Gardener.



Gathering around the Peace Pole with Tatomir



Windrush@75 with Richard Reddie





Prayers of hope for the future



Sister Margaret Shepherd



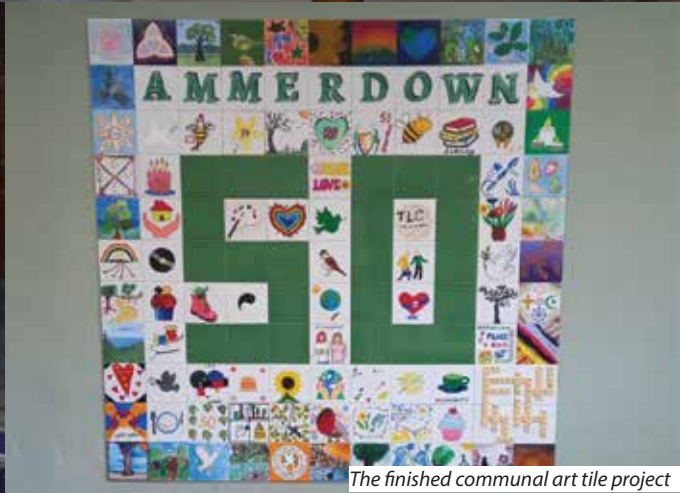
Interfaith Service with Canon Mary Gregory



Interfaith Service



Caring for Creation



The finished communal art tile project



Dancing!



Lord Hylton cutting the cake!



Stuart, Debbie, Lord Hylton, Sasha & Christine



Lord Hylton and the Deputy Lord Lieutenant







## Chaplain's Corner Autumn Break 2023

As a chaplain and a poet, I was glad to combine my interests to lead a Haiku-writing session at Ammerdown in September. We began by talking about the history and significance of the Haiku. We considered key works of Matsuo Bashō (1644–1694), Yosa Buson (1716–1784) and Kobayashi Issa (1763–1828). We then studied contemporary spiritual writers such as Martin Wroe (2022, *Julian of Norwich's Teabag: Poems and prayers from morning to night*). We wrote our own poems, adhering to the commonly (but by no means universally) accepted convention of producing English-language Haiku as three-line, seven-five-seven syllable poems. I shared examples of my own poetry.

### Balloons above Bath

Fire-breathing burners

Exclaim: We! Look! Down! On! You!

Idle boasts. Hot air.

### A few well-chosen words

In keeping with my Haiku-themed Spring Break workshop, I want to emphasise that brevity and clarity matter. This article is 600 words long. That's one 'I have a dream' (1963, Martin Luther King Jr, 288 words) plus one 'Gettysburg Address' (1863, Abraham Lincoln, 271 words) with an extra 41 words for good measure!

Like them or loathe them, political soundbites are there for a reason. Advertising slogans are hard to forget. Oscar Wilde's pithy quotes stay with us. A thick novel is not necessarily better or more enjoyable than a slim novella.

Over the years, I have found that ten kind words and a simple sincere condolence mean more than a shapeless sermon or a lengthy anecdote.

As Ammerdown's chaplain, I see how – in times of uncertainty, challenge, tragedy and grief – many people take solace and consolation in words from a familiar sacred text or learnt-by-heart prayer. Individuals who say they have no religious affiliation may still be comforted to hear the words of The Lord's Prayer (Our Father...) or Psalm 23 (The Lord is my shepherd...). And, as experience attests, when words fail us completely, we may still light a candle and/or sit together in silence.

### Where heaven and earth meet

The beauty of the Ammerdown experience is that it meets people where they are. If individuals need to receive words, Ammerdown has them. If they need to share their own words, Ammerdown will listen. And if folk prefer to dwell in silence, Ammerdown offers peaceful sanctuary. As we know, hospitality, peace and reconciliation at Ammerdown come with complimentary birdsong, woodland walks and a labyrinth. After all, where else, could a chaplain start his day like this?

### Pheasant on the Ammerdown labyrinth

The day's first coffee

Sipped as a red-faced pheasant

Walks the labyrinth.

Please join me in thanking God for The Ammerdown Centre – a precious, sacred, place where heaven and earth meet.

By Rupert Kaye,  
Ammerdown Chaplain

## Book Club Relunched

Our first book was 'Small Things Like These' by Claire Keegan which, married with the BBC's 'Woman in the Wall', made for a deep and challenging conversation. Both tell the story of the Magdalene Laundries, run by the Roman Catholic Church for 'fallen women'. Both encounter the complicit silence of communities controlled by the Church. One of the Book Club participants wrote: This 'has opened up so much more discussion in my head and points that I wish I could have articulated at the time. There are so many discussions to be had. I look forward to the next one'. Our conversations must go on – this is where change begins! Please do join us for the next Book Club on Sunday 26 November when we discuss 'The Girl from Nowhere'.





## Farewell to Debbie!

It is with great sadness that we say goodbye to Debbie Tutchell, our Deputy Lead Manager, on 13th October. Debbie began working at Ammerdown in August 2015 as the Accounts Assistant, progressing to Finance Manager and, during COVID, to Deputy Lead Manager. Debbie has worked tirelessly to ensure that the Ammerdown Centre survived COVID and beyond. She has been the epitome of our staff mantra – not limited to my job description – and has taken on the unblocking of drains, pulling toilet cisterns apart, painting bedrooms and attacking the Centre with mop and bucket in hand. With her creative, logical mind and her positivity, she has problem solved us through many challenges. Her commitment to and enthusiasm for Ammerdown has been outstanding and she will be greatly missed. We thank Debbie for all that she has done for Ammerdown and wish her and the family all the very best as they move on to new ventures.



## Christmas @ Ammerdown 2023

**27 - 29 October** - Sewing for Christmas with Anne Challenor-Wood - R £340 NR£244

**24 November** - Stained Glass Christmas Decorations with Tracey Quinn - £95

**24 - 26 November** - Advent Retreat with Rev Narinder Tegally - R £340 NR£244

**2 December** - Family Fun Day - FREE ENTRY

**3 December** - The Joseph Story with John Sibley - £8

**13 -16 December** - Christmas Meals - two courses £26.95 three courses £32.95

**13 December** - Candlelit Christmas Carols - Donations Welcome

**23 - 27 December** - Christmas House Party - R £780



The 100 club is a monthly draw where you pay a minimum donation of £12 for the year, to be assigned a number. Each month one number is drawn and the winner receives £50 of the money. The rest is donated to the Ammerdown charity. A cheque is posted to the winner and their name is featured in the Quarterly Newsletter. Please contact the Centre for information on joining.

**CT Simmonds - June 2023**

**J O'Sullivan - July 2023**

**A Singleton - August 2023**







# Ammerdown Christmas Meals 2023

Join us at Ammerdown this festive season!

Lunchtime Christmas Meals from  
Wednesday 13th to Saturday 16th December.

Gather for our Candlelit Christmas Carol Service at 12 noon or enjoy a drink in the bar. Food will be served at 1pm.

## *And new for 2023*

Evening Christmas Meals on  
Friday 15th and Saturday 16th December.

Gather for our Candlelit Christmas Carol Service at 6pm  
or enjoy a drink in the bar. Food served at 7pm.

Book for your group or family and friends.  
Call us on **01761 433709** or email [bookings@ammerdown.org](mailto:bookings@ammerdown.org)

Two Courses £26.95  
Three Courses £32.95  
Prices the same as 2022!  
Table wine available to pre-order.

Overnight accommodation and conference spaces available,  
please enquire.

