



100 Club

Recent 100 Club winners were Sue Smith (February), Margaret Hooper (March) and David Shuttle (April). All received a £50 cheque and Ammerdown received the same amount to support its work.

2013—a better year than anticipated

We do not yet have the final financial results for 2013 but know that we have broken even overall. This is a huge relief because, at the beginning of the year, we were facing the prospect of a sizeable deficit: bookings were down whilst costs were continuing to rise. Given that several Christian conference and retreat centres have recently closed or announced closure, we are very grateful that Ammerdown is keeping its head above water, even in difficult economic times. We are particularly grateful that gifts by individuals were significantly up in 2013. Thank You!

A big THANK YOU

In our last newsletter, we asked for help to refurbish the Traidcraft stall at the end of the corridor, and also to buy smart new display boards for the coffee area. Once again, you were very generous and we raised over £1,000. We have realised, though, that we cannot purchase furniture that perfectly fits the space available for Traidcraft so have asked a local carpenter to build shelving to our exact specifications. The new shelves are due to be fitted this month, and we simply cannot wait! Once we know how much money is left, we will order the new display boards - another welcome improvement for which we would like to thank you all.



Can you help?

There is so much information we wish to give our guests that it is starting to make our bedrooms look a bit untidy - far too many loose pieces of paper! We think the ideal solution is to purchase smart 'information folders' specially designed for hotels. The information will be easily accessible but will no longer clutter the rooms. The folders we like best cost £26 each. As always every gift, however small, will be gratefully received. Many thanks in advance!

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Now here is an intriguing thought:

"If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you have always got."

I heard this quoted several times in January when 21 professionals working in peace-building and conflict transformation gathered at Ammerdown.

Ammerdown, which has peace-building as one of its charitable objectives, had invited these professionals to spend two days away from the office to reflect together on the impact of their work and look to the future.

For me as Director of the Ammerdown Centre, it was a privilege to attend the discussions as an observer. The collective experience and know-how in the room was simply staggering. Between them they must have had first-hand knowledge of most, if not all, conflict zones in the world! There was deep frustration that too often their work 'picks up the pieces' of senseless armed conflict which could have been avoided. But there was also enormous goodwill and commitment in the room: they all believed in the work they were doing, and were determined to continue whatever may.



For me, though, the most striking feature of the conversation was the participants' willingness to think radically and start exploring new ways of bringing about a more peaceful world – hence the quote at the top. It was not so much about doing things better as doing things *differently*. The energy and creativity that, together, they brought to the process was breath-taking. By the end of the two days, the group had come up with an action plan to work together on a campaign to wake up the British public to what is actually happening around us – the true cost of armed conflict and the proven benefits of investing in peace instead.

They all said they would like to meet again in six months' time to review progress. Needless to say, Ammerdown was happy to offer its facilities again in order to support the process. No-one knows where it will take us. However, just think how exciting it would be if, in a few years' time, an amazing accomplishment on the national stage could be traced back to a discreet two day gathering at Ammerdown in January 2014!

With best wishes,

Benedict

New guest accommodation... or perhaps not!

No, the chalet-like cabin that has suddenly appeared on our front lawn is not for guests! It is in fact a biomass cabin that heats the main Centre through wood-pellets rather than oil. This is a very exciting development for Ammerdown - much cheaper to run, environmentally friendly and financially advantageous thanks to the incentives that the Government will pay Ammerdown for the next 20 years. The initial capital investment was, however, considerable. We could never have considered it without the £100,000 legacy we received in 2012. Investing it in the long term future of the Centre was, our Trustees thought, the wisest way to use such a large amount of money, and we are therefore deeply grateful to Mr Ney, who left Ammerdown the money - as well as to all our other friends who have remembered Ammerdown in their will. Bequests truly make a huge difference to us because they come over and above our normal income and can be spent on improvements that we would otherwise be unable to afford. *If you would like to find out more about this special way of giving, please use the response form to request our legacy leaflet.*



New face at Ammerdown...

Morfa Jones joined in January as a resident member of staff. Her previous experience is highly relevant, as Morfa was for 12 years the programme administrator of the Guy Chester Centre, a small Methodist retreat and conference centre in North London. You will no doubt meet Morfa when you next visit as she is often at reception, helps to welcome guests, and is also involved in Ammerdown's prayer life - amongst many other responsibilities! Morfa writes: *"What a treat it is to leave the noise*

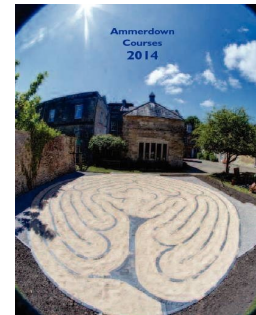
and bustle of London and make my home in the peace of Ammerdown. And what a warm welcome I have received from colleagues and guests. Thank you!"

When a craft course becomes life-changing...

One of the 'wonders' of Ammerdown is that guests often leave strengthened and renewed, even when this was not the primary reason for their visit. Dilys Fisher, the leader of our enamelling courses, shared the following with us after her last residential course: "The participants came from very different places in terms of lifestyle, cultures and responsibilities, yet formed a very supportive group. As the week went on, they started to talk about what they were trying to sort out in their lives. I find it helps to share concerns with others as often

we already have the answers in us and just need a bit of encouragement to discern them. In my experience, accepting the supportive listening and love of others often enables people to draw on their own strength and gain the courage to make decisions they had not dared make before. Each member of the group gave that sort of support to each other, and it was really lovely to see. I only wish I had discovered Ammerdown earlier. I am sure I would personally have benefited greatly from it!"

Remember - you can now book our courses online



Bookings for our 2014 Ammerdown courses have gone off to a very good start, with several courses already over-subscribed. Therefore, if you fancy taking part in one of our courses this year, we recommend that you don't leave it too long to book...

You can book by post or over the phone but please remember that you can also now book online at www.ammerdown.org. It is very easy to do, does not cost any more than booking by post or over the phone, is totally secure, and offers the additional advantage that the booking can be made at a time that suits you!

(PS. We are always happy to send you extra copies of our 2014 brochure if you would like to pass them on to relatives and friends. Please see the enclosed response form).

Lovely addition to our courtyard garden

Ammerdown has been gifted a lovely sculpture by local group 'Creativity Works'. The charity organised a series of art and craft sessions at Ammerdown for people with mental health problems and their carers. They all enjoyed the 'Ammerdown experience' so much that they decided to devote their last session to making a sculpture as a special gift to Ammerdown. The sculpture now has pride of place in our courtyard garden by the John Todd room.



Amazing first year for the Somer Valley Foodbank

Readers may remember that Ammerdown has not only been actively involved in helping to set up a Foodbank locally, but has also been acting as its secretariat ever since. The 'Somer Valley Foodbank' was officially launched in January 2014 and has already helped over 1,500 people (including over 500 children) with food parcels at times when money was so scarce that they could not afford to buy food. Most local churches are actively involved, alongside 100 individual volunteers. This is an amazing achievement in an era which is often accused of not being very caring! It is an absolute privilege for Ammerdown to be involved in such a worthy project locally, and we are committed to continuing to help in any way we can.