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## 100 Club

Recent 100 Club winners were Olive Oliver (August), Owen Hardwicke (September) and Kenneth Wilson (October). All received a £50 cheque and Ammerdown received the same amount to support its work.

## A big THANK YOU

In our last newsletter, we asked for help to buy a new commercial food mixer for Ammerdown's kitchen. We needed to raise £1,400, and once again you rose to the challenge magnificently! Including gift aid reclaim, you donated £1,425, and the brand new mixer now has pride of place in the kitchen. As you can see, Stuart, our Kitchen Supervisor, and our two cooks, Lynne and Chloe, are delighted with it! A huge thank from all of us - and especially from the kitchen team! - to every supporter who sent a gift.



## Coffee area refurbished

We have recently done something we have wanted to do for months: install proper units in the coffee area and to dispense with the tables that were used to serve teas and coffees. As the photo shows, the coffee area now looks a lot smarter and provides more space for guests to mill around. It is also now much easier to keep clean. All in all, a big improvement!



## Can you help?

Now that we have these smart new units, we would love to replace the very old (and rather tatty!) display boards on both sides of the coffee area. If funds allow, we would also like to buy proper shelving for our taidcraft stall, currently presented on two old tables. The tables do not look very attractive and also offer little space for display. Shelving of the kind we have for books and craft in the reception area would be so much better! As always, every gift, however small, will be gratefully received. Many thanks in advance!



# The Ammerdown Centre Newsletter

A Place of Hospitality, Spirituality and Growth

Oct 2013

***"Before I learnt to meditate, I was always stressed out but now I can relax for as long as I want."***

This comment was made by a 16 year old pupil from a local secondary school after his school arranged for him and fellow pupils to attend some Meditation sessions led by our colleague John in Ammerdown's chapel.

It might come as a surprise for you to hear that, in an age where young people seem to be constantly stimulated by technology - their mobile phone, their computer, their tablet - they take to meditation like ducks to water. Or could it be precisely because they are so stimulated all the time that the discovery of silence and stillness has such an impact on them?

Many teachers are concerned that today's young people are put under much more pressure and stress than the previous generation. Reasons for this abound, but contributing factors include pressures brought about by a stronger emphasis on exams and academic results together with fragmenting family and community life.

In this context, teaching young people the art of meditation has been shown to work wonders. John, a former Buddhist monk, joined Ammerdown as a resident member in November 2011. He has had years of experience of teaching meditation to adults. However, his particular passion is to teach young people because he has seen first-hand how effective meditation is at reducing pupils' stress and increasing their well-being. John is happy to teach all age groups but tends to concentrate on pupils in 5th and 6th forms, because that is when school tends to be at its most pressurised.

John says: *"It is a great privilege to introduce young people to a practice that is so readily accessible and beneficial. And it is a joy to hear about the positive effect meditation has on these young people - such as this 6th former who said at the end of my workshop: 'I had never experienced quietness or inner peace before. I always worried about the next pressing thing needing to be done...'"*

We are delighted that Ammerdown has been able to offer John's time and expertise free of charge as part of our ministry to young people. Our hope is that what they learn from John will help them for the rest of their lives.

With best wishes,



## Goodbye, dear Friend...

Our dear friend and colleague Harry died on 12 September, aged 87. He had joined Ammerdown in June 2005, when the Centre re-opened after extensive refurbishment. Many guests who have stayed at Ammerdown during these eight years will have met Harry in the dining room. And most would remember him, as Harry was a real character as well as a true gentleman - unfailingly courteous and helpful, always bright and cheerful, and often singing away in the wash-up area.

It was all very quick in the end. One week Harry was fine, the next one we noticed he was not his normal self. Subsequent tests revealed a large inoperable brain tumour. Harry was gone within eight weeks.

We all miss Harry terribly. Ammerdown has bought a bench and the staff has ordered a plaque in remembrance of their much loved colleague. So, if you ever sit on a bench in the back garden dedicated to a 'lovely gentleman', you will know this is in memory of 'our' Harry.



## and in remembrance of another...

A Memorial Service was held in Ammerdown's Chapel on Saturday 12 October in memory of our dear friend Richard Archer, a former member of Ammerdown's resident community.



Richard, who lived in New Zealand, died of a heart attack on 20th July when he was visiting Ammerdown during one of his regular 'European tours'. Many local friends attended the Memorial Service, whilst others came from further afield - including members of Richard's family and Sister Tessa, a Sister of Sion, who knew Richard very well from their time together at Ammerdown. The service was kept simple and informal, with everyone given a chance to say a few words about Richard. Like Harry, Richard seemed to be loved by all who knew him, and

especially appreciated for his genuine interest in people, his gentleness and wisdom, and his wicked sense of humour! He too will be greatly missed.

## Two different courses... but the same superb feedback!

Amongst the various courses held at Ammerdown in October were 'Understanding Islam', with Dr Chris Hewer, and 'Make your own Silver Jewellery', with Annette Bolton.

'Understanding Islam' is the course that famously attracted the fury of the English Defence League a year ago, when it threatened to call on its members to demonstrate outside Ammerdown if we continued to run it. Needless to say, we took no notice and persisted. Just as well, given that the feedback continues

to be superb. Here is what Martin, a parish priest in a very diverse area of Bristol, said about the three day course he attended this month:

***"Underlying the course are three crucial messages for our time: one, that we need to stop equating Islam with violent fundamentalism; two, that we ought to try and understand why some people might be driven to such lengths; three, that in the UK and globally we need to learn how to get on with our Muslim neighbours, otherwise the future could be very bleak. Against this backdrop, there are no limits to who should attend this excellent course, but I would say it is particularly relevant to leaders, educators and people in a position to shape public opinion."***



And here is what Ingrid, Ammerdown's bookkeeper, had to say about the two day 'Make your own Silver Jewellery' course she has just attended:

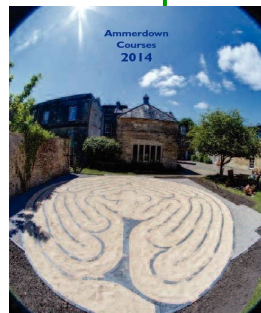


***"The tutor was excellent and the course was an inspiration. I was amazed at the pieces of jewellery that I and others produced, especially given that some of us had never done anything like this before. In fact, I enjoyed it so much that a friend and I bought a kit between us so that we can do more at home. I simply can't wait until next year's course!"***

If either course takes your fancy, fear not: they will be both repeated twice in 2014. So why not try something new and rewarding next year?

## 2014 programme due out in November

The Ammerdown 2014 Courses Programme should be out by the end of November. If you have attended a course in the last two years or are a Friend of Ammerdown, you should automatically receive a copy by post but you can also check out [www.ammerdown.org](http://www.ammerdown.org). Next year's 60 residential courses and 16 day events will offer the usual mix of courses focusing on spiritual and personal development alongside art/craft and holiday weeks; and also regular much-loved course leaders alongside newcomers. All in all, we hope that everybody will be able to find something they fancy!



## New meditation/contemplation room at Ammerdown

Given the growing interest in meditation or contemplation amongst our guests and several requests for a 'quiet room', we have just made the Harness Room into a room to be used solely for silent meditation and contemplation - using chairs, prayer stools or meditation cushions, whatever suits. The room is now open from early morning to late at night, so why not come and visit it when you are next here?