



## 100 Club

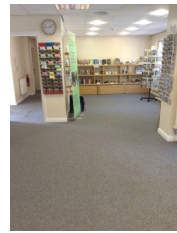
Recent winners were David Meadows (March), Denis Jones (April), Carol Hibbert (May), and Mr and Mrs Boswell (June).

## Thank You!

Last year, we asked you for help to buy a brand new commercial dishwasher because ours was literally on its last legs - and this is one piece of equipment that Ammerdown cannot do without! You contributed £2,150, which was then boosted by a timely legacy of £2,000. This gave us nearly to the pound the funds we needed for the purchase: truly amazing! Thank you all so very much. The new dishwasher is now in place and greatly appreciated by the washing-up staff.



## Another big THANK YOU!



In our last newsletter, we mentioned that our reception area was badly in need of a new carpet. As always, you rose to the challenge beautifully. A total of £3,300 was raised, which was more than enough to pay for a new carpet. The reception area is now looking a lot brighter and smarter! A huge Thank You to all who contributed.

## Leaving a bequest to Ammerdown

Legacies are a wonderful way of helping a cause close to your heart. The gentleman who bequeathed the £2,000 that helped us buy the new dishwasher was an elderly friend who had not visited for years due to distance and advancing years, but who loved Ammerdown. For more information about legacy giving, please ask for our legacy leaflet.

## Can you help?

Our next project is the refurbishing of the lounge/bar. We believe that new flooring and higher chairs and tables, Together with a bit of flair and creativity, could make it a more convivial and brighter place in which guests can relax. As always, every gift, however small, will be gratefully received. You can send a cheque, give us a call or make a gift via our website



<http://ammerdown.org/can-you-help>



# The Ammerdown Centre Newsletter

A Place of Hospitality, Spirituality and Growth June 2016

***O God our creator,  
your kindness has brought us the gift of a new day.  
Help us to leave yesterday  
and not covet tomorrow  
but to accept the uniqueness of today.***

This ancient prayer is frequently said in Ammerdown's chapel as it is part of our morning prayer service. In many ways, it epitomises the much more recent and hugely popular phenomenon of 'Mindfulness' - also called the 'art of living in the moment'.

A mindful person lives in the present and does not get obsessed with the future or the past. Yes, it is important to plan for the future and learn from the past, but it is even more important to appreciate who and where we are right now, and find joy in that.

It is much easier said than done, though. Guests who come to stay at Ammerdown are fortunate: being away from home in a place steeped in serenity makes it probably easier to 'be in the moment'. And the benefits can be immense:

Ammerdown's guest Anna had such a powerful and enlightening 'mindful' experience during her recent weekend here that she offered to write about it for the newsletter (see overleaf).

However, how about when guests go back home to the inevitable ups and downs and stresses of life? I for one know how easy it is to become so preoccupied with the never ending list of 'things to do next' that I all too often miss out on the 'divine sparks' around me - be it a bird singing, the smell of freshly-cut grass or a guest laughing. Yet being mindful does not need to be difficult. One of the most helpful pieces of writing on the subject that I have come across (so much so that I have reproduced it overleaf) is by Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh, who shows how humble tasks such as washing dishes can be transformed through mindfulness. I do the washing up in our house and can testify that it works, and that a similar approach can help bring pleasure and joy to other everyday tasks. Ammerdown's morning prayer service is right to remind us that every new day is a gift, unique to each one of us. If you think about it, what an amazing gift this is - one which is not to be dismissed or discarded...

With best wishes,

*Benedicte*



The Ammerdown Centre  
Ammerdown Park  
Radstock BA3 5SW

Phone: 01761 433709

Email:

[centre@ammerdown.org](mailto:centre@ammerdown.org)

Website:

[www.ammerdown.org](http://www.ammerdown.org)

Registered Charity No.  
1010244

## My 'Nature and Spirituality' weekend - by Anna

My Ammerdown experience was everything I had hoped it would be and so much more! I attended the recent Nature and Spirituality course because not only did I need a break, but I also had questions. Lots of questions! I was seeking reassurance, I suppose, that my ideas around spirituality were 'allowed', and also that they were not 'simplistic'. I also wanted to make connections with others whose ideas reflected mine. These two requirements were easily accommodated in the safe and supportive environment that Ammerdown provides. What I wasn't expecting was the closeness that grew between our group's members over the weekend, which continues as I write.

The course itself was intensely stimulating with a very varied programme. Through lively discussions, poetry, meditation and creativity to name a few activities, our group was challenged and centred in equal measure in a gentle and nurturing way by our facilitators, Sue Glanville and Dr Liz Christie.

I have many special memories to treasure from that weekend. One was the nature meditation, when I sat by myself amongst the spring flowers, leaning against a tree, and found that I could suddenly see the beauty around me with much more clarity, not just with my eyes but with my soul too; or the time when I was attempting to paint the beauty I had seen, when God gave me the words 'I am Here'. Here and now, in the midst of His Creation, God was with me and I was with God. One experience I will never forget is our group dancing a Native American Indian dance in the woods at dusk, whilst bats danced a reel above us. A truly magical moment. And later, in the darkness, we softly sang lullabies, surrounded by tall, silent trees hundreds of years older than ourselves. That evening, in a beautiful and supportive place, each one of us experienced a connection with nature and with the Divine as we had never experienced before.



painting by Anna

While packing my bag on our last day, I realised that alongside my clothes I was also packing the answers to my questions, lots of special memories and the peace that only the magic of Ammerdown can give you. What so many guests before me have said about Ammerdown is true: there is something running deep within the very fabric of the building and the grounds; you might call it serenity, the Divine or God. Whatever

word you use, it is strong, still and loving. I can only hope that many more people will have the opportunity to experience this amazing gift.

## Washing Dishes - by Thich Nhat Hanh

"To my mind, the idea that doing dishes is unpleasant can occur only when you are not doing them. Once you are standing in front of the sink with your hands in the hot water, it is really quite pleasant. I enjoy taking my time with each dish, being fully aware of the dish, the water and each movement of my hands. I know that if I hurry in order to eat dessert sooner, the time of washing dishes

will be unpleasant. That would be a pity, for each minute, each second, of life is a miracle worth living to the full. If I am incapable of washing dishes joyfully, if I want to finish them quickly so I can have dessert, I will be equally incapable of enjoying my dessert. With the fork in my hand, I will be thinking about what to do next, and the texture and flavour of the dessert, together with the pleasure of eating it, will be lost. I will always be dragged into the future, never able to live in the present moment. Each thought, each action in the sunlight of awareness, is sacred. I confess it takes me a bit longer to do the dishes, but I live fully in every moment, and I am happy. Washing the dishes is at the same time a means and an end - that is, not only do we do the dishes in order to have clean dishes, we also do dishes to live fully in each moment while washing them."



## Welcome to Katie and Stacey

Katie and Stacey have recently joined the Housekeeping team, after two of our colleagues retired earlier this year. They are both working Mums - Stacey (on the right) has a six month old daughter, and Katie has two daughters aged 11 and 6. They have settled in really well and are a great addition to the team.



## New: Centering Prayer at Ammerdown



'Centering prayer' simply means sitting in silence and being open to God's love for us and to our love for God. Sarah and Libby, who lead Ammerdown's Quiet Days, are inviting you to join them between 7.30pm and 8.30pm every fourth Monday of the month to share in this enriching contemplative practice. This is in addition to the Taize prayers led by a local group in our chapel on the first Tuesday of every month. Everyone is welcome to join in simple Taize chants, Gospel reflections, contemplative silence and intercessory prayers for the world.

## Suggestions welcome for our 2017 programme

We have started putting together Ammerdown's 2017 programme of courses and events. If you have any particular theme, activity or course leader to suggest, Ammerdown's Director Benedicte would be delighted to hear from you. You can call her, write to her or email her at [b.scholefield@ammerdown.org](mailto:b.scholefield@ammerdown.org).

## Exploring the theme of Mercy

A reminder that we will be hosting a special day on Saturday 2nd July to look at the theme of mercy. Bishop Crispian Hollis and Ms Carmody Grey will be the main speakers (see [www.ammerdown.org](http://www.ammerdown.org) for more information). The cost is £20, including lunch and all refreshments. You can book online or over the phone.