



From the Chair of Trustees

A reflection

This Eastertide I was looking through some photographs recording some of the many visits to Israel and Palestine that I made with my Catholic colleague and students from two Universities. The photos record our journeys to Masada and the Dead Sea, onwards to Eilat and the monastery of St Catherine's in the Sinai. They record our visit to the Golan heights and the Sea of Galilee, to the City of Jerusalem and the West Bank. More importantly the photos record our meetings, often over meals, with Israelis, Jews, Christians, Muslims and Palestinians and especially being entertained by a group of Palestinian women.

People shared their stories, their concerns and their hopes.

Since October last year, the world's press has been dominated by the war in Israel/Gaza. We have, from afar, witnessed the horror of human suffering on both sides.

We have recently held a silent vigil for Israel/Gaza at Ammerdown. We thought we should have an occasion where through silence, music and a lit candle that our thoughts should be particularly focussed on these tragic events. At the heart of Ammerdown is peace and reconciliation which in today's world are very important messages to convey. We know there are no easy answers but the hope of Eastertide is that there may be an end to war, famine and human suffering.

Rev Dr Stuart Burgess

From the Director

*Dear Friends,
I'd like to welcome you to the
Spring 2024 newsletter. I
hope you find it informative
and interesting.*

I started as Ammerdown's Director in mid-February and, as people sometimes say, every day remains a discovery! Having been a guest at Ammerdown previously, it's fascinating and encouraging to see what goes on behind the scenes. The staff here are so committed to ensuring guests receive a warm welcome - from initial booking enquiry right through to when we say our farewells. When you visit, we want your experience to be a positive one and we hope that you will encounter the tranquillity of this sanctuary of peace and take something of that transforming experience into your everyday lives.

At the core of Ammerdown's ethos is a commitment to hospitality, peace, reconciliation and the hope that they can bring so, as we plan our programme and make the centre available to outside

groups, we hope that all will share in something of that hope.

The updated programme is now available for the remainder of 2024 and, as we've developed this, we've sought to bring some extra variety to the courses as well as maintaining those which have been more popular in the past.

You can view the whole Ammerdown brochure as a PDF here (or contact us if you need a hard copy), <https://www.ammerdown.org/docs//2024/Final-Version-Virtual.pdf>



It runs thematically (pages 9 to 29) or you can view it chronologically (on pages 30 and 31). I hope you find something in its pages that attracts you. Let me highlight a few that might be of interest:

John Bell, from the Iona Community, will share some insights into the meaning of **Advent for adults only** in early December (Page 9)



Roy Searle, from the Northumbria Community will give us an **Introduction Celtic spirituality** and its inspiration and relevance to today (November - page 9).



If **Labyrinths** are of interest to you, how about a weekend drawing and walking these with **Jan Sellars** and **Maud Grainger?** (June - page 11)



Dave Tomlinson will return in September with his take on **'How to read the Bible and still be a Christian!'** (September - page 10)



Perhaps you've heard about 'Ignatian spirituality' and wondered what it is? Ammerdown's Chaplain, Rupert Kaye, will cover The Essentials over a sunny (hopefully!) weekend in July. (Page 12)



Many will testify to the transforming impact of the **Enneagram** as a way to understand themselves better and help their spiritual growth and wellbeing. **Helen English** and **Joanne Bonnet** from Positive Space will be delivering two courses, **'Enneagram Essentials'** (September) and **'Holy**

Ideas and Essential Qualities' (November). (Page 15)



Narinder Tegally will be offering three **Quiet Days** during the year. She also invites those who want to work through their experiences of bereavement or loss to join her in a Bereavement Course on four Thursdays in October/November. (Page 16)



On pages 17 to 19 you'll see a series of the popular **art and craft courses** and on pages 20/21 you'll find courses on **literature (Hazel Jones)** and **poetry (Rosie Jackson)**



As you **Search for Wisdom**, maybe you'll want to join **Sue Glanville** as she shares some of her searching and encourages individual and group activities on the theme. (July - page 10).



And if you want to have a Christmas to remember that has a variety of fun and reflective times to dip in and out of as you prefer, then why not consider the **Christmas House Party** (23 to 27 December, page 29). Note the **Early Bird discounted rate for bookings made by June!**



These are just a selection of events from this year's programme - there are plenty of others too, so please do browse through it! And if you don't see anything you like, then please tell us what would

interest you – we'll do what we can to add popular requests to our future programming! Please also note the details of our Bursary Fund that is available to enable those experiencing financial hardship to participate in our events (page 8).

Finally, it's important that as a charity we generate commercial income from letting our premises to external organisations and groups when the course programme allows.

We have an excellent suite of rooms and accommodation available, so if you or someone you know is looking for a venue for a business meeting or conference, or if there's a group who want to organise their own retreat or away day, please let

them know about Ammerdown so we have an opportunity to quote! Details are on pages 4 and 5. Thank you.

I send you my best wishes, and hope to meet many of you when you visit Ammerdown in the coming months and years.

Martin Green



Social Justice

Thank you

for your kind donations over the Christmas period. We raised £450 for Friends of bereaved Families Forum. This is an organisation supporting families affected by the Israel conflict.

Friends of the Bereaved Families Forum

The Social Justice book club membership is growing, as is the Caring for Creation group. The book club programme is filled with topics relevant to Social Justice, discussing topics relevant to anti-Jewish racism, institutional racism, conflict, humanitarian aid, mental health, and identity.

Still to come...

<p style="color: white; font-weight: bold;">19th May</p>	<p style="color: white; font-weight: bold;">7th July</p>	<p style="color: white; font-weight: bold;">6th October</p>	<p style="color: white; font-weight: bold;">24th November</p>
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We recently hosted a refugee lunch at Ammerdown which brought refugees from Ukraine and Afghanistan to Ammerdown. Although a rainy day, there were some very creative crafts to mark mothers' day.



As part of Caring for Creation, partnership working with A Rocha has led to Ammerdown achieving a Silver award through the scheme. This is great news for Ammerdown. Channelling god's creation through worship, food, our beautiful surroundings and how we preserve our space to offer peace and hospitality to friends of Ammerdown has gone a long way to this achievement. In the future, we have great ideas for continuing our path to a more resourceful and sustainable way of maintaining and developing Ammerdown.

If you are interested in learning more, please sign up to our monthly Caring for Creation Zoom and join the wonderful team who advocate for sustainable churches and are committed to protecting God's earth.

Ammerdown is also applying for an Award of Sanctuary. This movement celebrates organisations that go above and beyond to offer welcome to those seeking sanctuary. I am sure you will agree, that Ammerdown creates a safe space of welcome, so we look forward to this project and playing our part towards a more inclusive, compassionate society.



*Laura
Social Justice Initiator*

The Woman at the Well at The Ammerdown Centre

AN ICON VISITS

The Retreat Association icon will be staying at The Ammerdown Centre from Wednesday 7th May to Monday 10th June 2024. But what is it and what is its significance?

Icons are paintings which usually depict a Bible story or Bible character(s). These beautiful hand-painted images are intended to inspire awe and wonder, and stimulate quiet reflection, contemplation and prayer.

For centuries, icons have been cherished by places of Christian prayer, worship and community because they have the power to open up a world of sacred stories, spiritual truths and religious doctrines to people of all languages and levels of literacy.

AN ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS

The Retreat Association icon depicts a noontime encounter between Jesus and an unnamed Samaritan woman at the Well of Jacob in the village of Sychar (John 4:1-42).

This icon was presented to the Retreat Association in 2018 by its creator,

renowned iconographer John Coleman a.k.a. Ikon John. Since that time, it has toured the UK, visiting retreat centres, churches and cathedrals.

During its stay at Ammerdown, the Retreat Association icon will reside in the chapel. If you would like to visit, please phone ahead to check accessibility. And, of course, you may wish to book a place on The Samaritan Woman at the Well Icon Quiet Day led by Rev Narinder Tegally on Saturday 8 June, 9:30am-4pm. (Cost: £60. Course Code: D1024)

Rupert
Ammerdown's Chaplain



Helpfully, Malcolm Guite (a long-time friend of Ammerdown) offers the following reflection on the Retreat Association Icon (Church Times, 10 August 2018):

EXHAUSTED AND THIRSTY

I reflected on how appropriate this particular image was for the Retreat Association. The story begins with exhaustion, stress, and rejection, and ends with a series of wonderful, paradoxical transformations and renewals: Jesus is exhausted at the well, sharing the exhaustion of the world and all the frustration and futility of our living; yet he is also [...] the well and spring of all renewal, and is able to offer this stranger the fountain of his own eternal life welling up within her.

ISOLATED AND SHUNNED

The woman is isolated and shunned by her community, which is why she comes to the well at noon and not in the cool of the morning or evening with the other women.

She sees nothing but problems and barriers at first: the divisions of race and religion, the practical

problem of the deep well, of having no buckets – and then the living presence of Jesus changes everything.

REFRESHED AND RENEWED

We see him through the icon, with one hand on his heart, the other on the water, himself the living connection between the two. Gazing at the icon, we see that the living water is already at the brim of the well. Has his presence drawn it up from the depths, or is it in fact flowing from him into the well, and not the other way round? Certainly, everything is reversed for the woman, and she who had to walk away from her village to find an outer source of refreshment will soon herself be a centre of renewal and be spreading good news in community.





Ammerdown 100 Club



Win £50!



WINNERS
DEC 23 - T HILL
JAN 24 - B SMITH
FEB 24 - A SINGLETON

Email centre@ammerdown.org to sign up!

AMMERDOWN CREAM TEAS 2024

Join us for a scrumptious cream tea in the beautiful Ammerdown garden this Summer.

No need to book.

£6

Same price as last year!



2pm-5pm

9th & 23rd June

7th & 14th July

Our 2024 programme is now online! Book Now!

01761 433709

centre@ammerdown.org

www.ammerdown.org



The Ammerdown Centre
Ammerdown Park

BA3 5SW

