



100 Club

Recent 100 Club winners were Sue and Roger Meadows (November 2012), Brian Arthur (December 2012) and Anne Brownbill (January 2013).

Marking Ammerdown's 40th Birthday

Ammerdown will be 40 years old in June - an occasion that we think deserves celebrating! We will be holding a special 40th anniversary event on **Saturday 8 June**: an afternoon concert and talk on peace-building, followed by an anniversary buffet supper at Ammerdown, entirely free of charge. You will all receive an invitation by post in a few weeks' time, but please pencil the date in your diary. For those travelling from afar, some overnight accommodation will be available, but bookings will be taken on a 'first come first serve' basis.



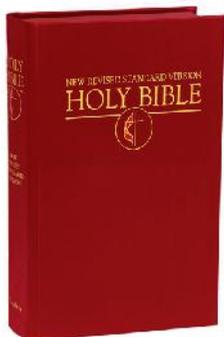
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A big Thank You!

Once again, your generosity has astounded us! We asked in the last newsletter for help to improve our microphones in the Chapel and in our two largest conference rooms - including the purchase of rather expensive wireless lapel mikes for the John Todd and the Trevett. We needed to raise £1,642 - we received £1,654 with the Gift Aid! Not only this, but we were also able to get the new lapel mikes installed just in time for Fr Daniel O'Leary's very popular Advent retreat. We cannot thank you enough.

Can you help?

Like many hospitality centres, we keep a copy of the Bible in every bedroom, for use by guests. The ones we have were bought many years ago, and are showing their age - in some cases the cover only stays thanks to sellotape! We therefore think it is time to buy new copies, at £15 each. Any additional funds will be used to buy new resources for the Chapel, including new Hymn Books: many of our current hymn books are also falling to pieces, just like the Bibles! As always, any gift, however small, will be gratefully received. **Thank You!**



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The Ammerdown Centre



Newsletter

January 2013

At the heart of Ammerdown's mission there has always been a desire to offer a safe and open space for vulnerable or marginalised people in society. Such spaces seem to be in rather short supply in today's society - spaces which accept people just as they are, with open arms, without passing judgement or setting unrealistic expectations.

One of my great joys as Director of Ammerdown is to see people who feel 'different' blossom in the environment we provide. Here is what Jenny writes about taking part in our annual break specially tailored for M.E. sufferers:

"I am excited, my much anticipated holiday has just started, we are just going down Ammerdown's drive. As soon as you get out of the car, you are aware you are somewhere special, the serenity and calm just descend. It is a totally amazing feeling, and something I am at a loss to describe. Ammerdown has an air about it which needs to be experienced: it is beyond explanation!

For the last three years, attending the M.E. week at Ammerdown has been my one and only holiday (before Ammerdown started these holidays, I had no break at all!). I am able to rest, mentally and physically, but more importantly, 'completely'. The outside world disappears, and it is wonderful to be able to totally immerse myself in such a positive place, where I am not only physically cared for (I always put on rather a lot of weight each visit!) but spiritually and emotionally. The opportunity to meet others with the same condition, with no explanation required, makes having M.E. more bearable. I am accepted as I am, there are no expectations and pressures. The activities are tailored for us and it is lovely to be able to have fun with others. This is hugely important as M.E. is a very isolating illness. The companionship in a home away from home is 'just what the doctor ordered'.

I can only afford the holiday, though, because Ammerdown gives me a generous bursary. I know that, as financial supporters, you help make it possible. I want you all to know that it is money very well spent. My annual break at Ammerdown quite simply helps keep me going. Thank You!"

I would like to add my thanks to Jenny's for your support. It makes a real difference to people's lives, and there is nothing more worthwhile than this...

With best wishes,

Benedicta



A poem for Ammerdown...

Beryl, a Friend of Ammerdown, loves coming here. She says Ammerdown has never ever failed to refresh and renew her. Last Easter, whilst here, she wrote this poem to try and express in words what Ammerdown means to her.:

*There is a calm about this place that gladdens me.
An arrow of delight, sheer and pervasive shafts
cleanly piercing my inmost being.
Ammerdown, beloved Ammerdown,
where all may shed their outer selves
of falseness and delusions.
Be fearless in speech and feelings.
Give allowance to those, as yet unshaped,
forbidden stirrings of another way.
Permitted here our faltering steps
to wander different tracks and other pathways.
Kindness, compassion, gentle listening
tend both our joyful and our downcast musings.
Ammerdown. Beloved Ammerdown.
We come, battered and crushed by modern living.
only to rise with Christ once more on Easter Day.*



Isn't it wonderful? To me, the poem encapsulates the core values of hospitality at the heart of Ammerdown: a desire to offer a safe and open space where people can re-connect with themselves. Henri Nouwen famously wrote: "Hospitality means primarily the creation of a free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer a space where change can take place. ... It is not a method of making our God and our way into the criteria of happiness, but the opening to others to find their God and their way." This is precisely the type of hospitality that we aim to provide at Ammerdown. It is good to read that our guests feel we are getting it right!

New face in Ammerdown's kitchen



In my seven years as Director of Ammerdown, I have discovered that the most difficult job to recruit for is that of cook. Good cooks are quite simply in very short supply! At the end of last year we were therefore delighted to welcome Chris as our new Kitchen Supervisor. Chris has a lot of relevant experience but was looking for a new challenge: a place where food would not only feed bodies, but souls too. Ammerdown is obviously just right for him!

New Ammerdown Website!

By the time you receive this newsletter, we will hopefully have launched our brand new website at www.ammerdown.org. Our old website was not bad, but times have moved on a lot since we had it done seven years ago, and facilities such as on-line internet booking are now a 'must'. We took the opportunity to refresh our image and have come up with a new logo that integrates our strapline. We hope you like it! In addition to offering the facility to book courses on-line, the new website should be much more user-friendly. Please do take a look and let us know what you think. A website is never 'finished': it is always work in progress. We would therefore value your thoughts on how we could improve it further - as well as your help in spotting any typographical or grammatical mistake that may have slipped through!



Ammerdown helps launch local Foodbank

Although Ammerdown welcomes guests from all over the UK and further afield, it also has a local ministry. For example, we arrange regular 'Pampering Days for Carers' for the exclusive benefit of local carers. We also have our own 'TLC' Club for elderly people in the local community looking for fellowship. This is all very worthwhile work, but we could not help feeling that there was more that we could and should do. We were therefore delighted when the opportunity arose for Ammerdown to be involved in setting up a Foodbank for the local area - a wonderful project that brings local churches and charities together to help people in crisis. The aim is to provide emergency food to families who have hit desperate times and have no money left for food, and also to get professional agencies involved for longer term help. So, after months of work behind the scenes, the 'Somerset Valley Foodbank' was officially launched on 8 January, with Ammerdown providing free administrative back-up and telephone service. These are very exciting times indeed...
(For more information about Foodbanks, visit www.trusselltrust.org)



Come and see us at CRE in Bristol on 23 & 24 January

The renowned 'Christian Resources Exhibition' is coming to the South West region for the first time in January 2013, and the Ammerdown Centre will have its own stand. It is hoped that the new venue in Bristol will attract many visitors wanting to find out more about 'how to equip and resource churches and Christian ministries'. As an exhibitor, we have complimentary tickets (worth £6 each) to give away to supporters who would like to visit the Exhibition, but you will need to move fast: please ring CRE Sales Office on 01793 418 218 and quote BRSTL.