

Faith Retreat Eco News June 2011

Hello,

In this edition, we share some news of an award for Holland House, a BBC documentary about HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, forthcoming summer workshops at Buckfast Abbey, and eco guidelines. Before that however, I'd like to take the opportunity to say thank you and farewell as I move on from ARC. The newsletters started almost three years ago, and it really has been an inspiring journey learning about the unique ways you are all caring for creation. It's been a delight seeing the wonderful photographs you have shared with us along the way – from eco buildings to snowy winter gardens – they really have been splendid. I leave you in the very safe hands of Victoria Finlay: victoriaf@arcworld.org and look forward to reading about your continued progress in future newsletters.

Best wishes,

Nicki McHugh

A. Footprints Award for Holland House

In our April newsletter we brought you news of the Footprints Award Ceremony which was being held on 19 May at the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). We are delighted to let you know that Holland House won the “community vote award” for their “contribution to sustainability and environmental excellence in the Foodservice Industry”! Rev Ian Spencer wrote to share the news, telling us there were 33 competitors. “The main thing is that a Christian organisation won a secular-based national award centred on sustainability. It shows religion is serious about the issue and has something to offer the debate. If we can be of encouragement to others, then so much the better.” If you would like to see a video of Rev Ian at the event and find out more about the awards, please visit: <http://www.footprint-awards.com/home.html> And see below for their policies.

B. HRH The Duke of Edinburgh and ARC

You may also be interested in knowing that ARC will be featured in a BBC documentary on HRH The Prince Philip this Thursday evening (9 June 2011). ARC's Secretary-General, Martin Palmer, is a key contributor in the film, which has been made to mark HRH The Prince Philip's 90th birthday on 10 June.

In “The Duke at 90”, Fiona Bruce talks to HRH The Prince Philip, the longest-serving consort in British royal history, about his life and his greatest achievements.

As well as The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, which has helped an estimated seven million young people in 132 countries since 1956, and his role as International President of the WWF from 1981 to 1996, HRH The Prince Philip also discusses his work with the world's major faiths – including his role in founding ARC.

“The Duke at 90” will be on BBC1 on this Thursday, 9 June at 9pm.

C. Bee-keeping Courses at Buckfast Abbey

We were inspired to learn of the many workshops and courses Buckfast Abbey runs in South Devon. And with the warmer days on their way, have you considered attending – or hosting - a

bee-keeping course? Buckfast Abbey's Taster course tells you everything you need to know: costs, types of hive, the safe citing of hives, how and when to buy bees, equipment needed, seasonal management, time commitment, pitfalls and the joys of beekeeping. The day starts at 11am and runs until 4pm. The next one takes place on 16 June. For more details, visit: http://www.buckfast.org.uk/more_details.php?id=196

D. Eco-friendly guidelines

In our last newsletter we asked retreats to contact us if they had eco-friendly policies to share – or indeed if they might be trying to set them up. We're delighted to say we had a very positive response and would like to share Holland House's guidelines with you in this edition as inspiration. Replies are trickling in, so don't worry if you haven't had a chance to respond yet.

Holland House: 40 Ways to Live in Harmony

By Rev Ian Spencer



Holland House is situated in the beautiful Vale of Evesham, an area with a long history of market gardening including some of the best quality apples, plums, and pears, and of course the famous grass (asparagus). With Bredon Hill looking down upon the meandering Avon, its flood plains, pastures and ancient bluebell woods, it seemed to us that being situated in such a wonderful place where human cultivation and natural ecology works so well in harmony together, Holland House should be part of that on-going harmony.

To that end here's a list of the things we're doing to realise that harmony more fully:



- **GARDEN AND GROUNDS**

- Garden and grounds worked organically (no artificial pest control, fertilisers, weed control).
- Large Kitchen garden providing some of our vegetables and fruit and salads.
- Rainwater harvesting butts installed.
- Standing and fallen dead-wood left to provide habitat for species.
- Careful mowing regime to encourage promotion of wild flowers.
- Composting regimes in place, including composting any waste food.
- Creation of a Bible Garden trail to encourage awareness of Biblical significance of plants.
- Installation of bird boxes, including one for Tawny Owls.
- Installation of beehive (from which Holland House enjoys some of its own honey!).
- Careful maintenance of river-bank using willow trees and nettle-beds to secure the bank.
- Creation of a natural history of the garden by Dr Paul Smith (BSc, MIEEM, Cenv) used to help us understand the eco-systems and plants in our garden/grounds.

- **HOUSE CLEANING AND SUPPORT**

- The house is cleaned only with natural or environmentally friendly products – using brands such as *Method*, *Ecover*, *Simple* and *No More Chemicals*.
- We use *Johnson-Stalbridge* linen services who have an environmental policy.

- *Hippo* water savers have been placed in all suitable water cisterns.
- The majority of light bulbs are now energy efficient.
- The roof spaces have all been insulated.
- The cavity walls have been filled with insulation.



- **BANKING**
- We bank with the Co-Operative Bank due to their ethical policy of investments.



- **ELECTRICITY**
- We use *Green Energy UK* who generate power from sustainable sources.



- **ADMINISTRATION**
- We use recycled paper for printing and recycle all our ink cartridges.
- We switch computers and printers off each night (not left in “standby mode”).
- All paper waste is recycled, and we endeavour to use electronic archiving where possible.
- We re-use plastic wallets and folders so keeping purchases to an absolute minimum.
- We re-use envelopes and turn “waste” paper into note-pads.



- **THE CHAPEL**
- Communion wine from Fairtrade.



- **THE KITCHEN**

- All food is freshly prepared and cooked on the premises, including all cakes and biscuits.
- Only Fairtrade coffee and tea used.
- Meals prepared “to order” to reduce waste, endeavouring to provide enough but not excess.
- Reduce meat-based meals, with two days of meat, two fish, and three vegetarian.
- Local grocers, local butchers and local farm shops used wherever possible to support local growers and reduce food-footprint.
- Changed fish suppliers to *M&J Seafood* to ensure sustainable and traceable fish supplies.
- Local eggs used in cooking.
- Kitchen works closely with the Kitchen garden to maintain connection to seasonal variety.



- **BAR, SNACKS AND DRINKS**

- Bar has mostly locally brewed beers, including lager brewed in Oxfordshire.
- Fruit juices and ciders made in Pershore mostly from local fruit.
- Elderflower juices made from elderflowers picked around Bredon Hill (*Nurses Cottage*).
- Some wine from local producer *Tiltridge Vineyard* based in Upton on Severn.
- Crisps from Hereford supplier *Tyrrells*, potato and assorted vegetable.
- All chocolate and snacks are Fairtrade only.
- All bottles and cans are recycled.

Things we still have to do:

Given that some of the initiatives above have room for improvement/development, here are some other areas we’re hoping to explore:

- Install an energy-monitoring system to help identify “hot-spots”/less efficient electrical products.
- Explore local sources of energy to reduce our carbon foot-print further e.g. solar power, power derived from rivers, wind turbines, ground source.
- Remove all bottled water and replace with tap water (part of Holland House accommodation has tap water fed from cold water tanks, rather than directly from mains. This requires some creative thinking as re-plumbing would be a major undertaking).
- Purchase a set of bicycles for guests to use to explore the surrounding area.
- Purchase a clinker-built rowing boat for guests to explore the river (bit of dream this one!)
- Consider where secondary glazing may be appropriate.
- Find organic wafers for use in Chapel.

I’m sure there’s more we can do – any suggestions please email the Warden at:

ian.spencer@hollandhouse.org, or write to The Warden, Holland House, Main Street, Cropthorne, Pershore, Worcestershire, WR10 3NB.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this list, we hope it inspires you to find new ways of loving one another by loving the planet we all call “home”.



“In that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, with the birds of the air, and with the creeping things of the ground. Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth, to make them lie down safely”. The Bible: Hosea 2:18

With best wishes,

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