

the  
magdalen  
project



a landscape for learning

## the magdalen project: a landscape for learning

Set on the banks of the meandering River Axe on the Dorset-Somerset border, The Magdalen Project is an organic farm and education centre conceived as a landscape for learning. With its lush watermeadows and wooded valleys, its ancient oaks and colonies of orchids, Magdalen offers a liberating and inspirational environment for adventure, discovery and personal development. Magdalen is owned by the Wessex Foundation, an educational charity which aims to promote a deeper understanding of sustainable development and a greater appreciation of our natural and rural heritage. At Magdalen we seek to preserve traditional (and fast vanishing) rural and farming skills, while looking to new technologies to help us live more responsibly and sustainably on the land.

We welcomes all kinds of visitors, from playgroups to senior management teams, for a wide variety of workshops, courses and eco-adventures. All our programmes are tailor-made for each group and the centre can also be rented for private groups and parties. Prices charged are the minimum possible to keep the project viable: as a charity, it is our mission to reach as many people as we can.

## the land

For hundreds of years, the land at Magdalen (or Maudlin) has been worked as a mixed farm: the field names (eg Home Mead) tell us that sheep have been grazing these meadows since medieval times. Today farms of this size are no longer commercially viable, so Magdalen's 132 acres have been divided into a demonstration small holding and grazing land managed principally for wildlife. The small holding provides fruit and vegetables, eggs and pork for the Centre, while Magdalen's woodlands and meadows are home to badgers and deer, rare butterflies and buzzards and the traditionally managed hedgerows blaze with wild flowers. A trail runs right round the farm, inviting you to explore Magdalen's rich diversity of natural and managed habitats: open pasture, watermeadows, bluebell woods and scrub, along with five large ponds and a variety of demonstration gardens. To help preserve local distinctiveness, the orchard has been planted with traditional West Country varieties - some hundreds of years old and small scale willow beds providing material for craftwork.

## further afield

For geography students, the surrounding countryside, the nearby Somerset Levels and the Dorset Heritage Coast provide a wealth of opportunity for study. Others may simply enjoy the wonderful walking all around the farm, the excellent local pubs, the seaside charms of Lyme Regis and Beer and fossil hunting along the 'Jurassic Coast'. Historians can explore Iron Age forts and Civil War battlefields, while garden enthusiasts will be delighted to find Forde Abbey on the doorstep and East Lambrook, Abbotsbury and many other outstanding gardens close by.



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## facilities

an inspiring and flexible range of facilities adaptable for a wide range of group and courses



### Granary

This delightful meeting space has been created from the top floor of a historic barn and fitted with a semi-sprung floor to make it suitable for yoga and movement classes, as well as seminars, lectures and workshops. It is also ideal for smaller parties.

Capacity: 60 Party; 40 Boardroom; 50 Classroom / Theatre



### Seminar Room

A spacious ground-floor teaching room equipped with tables, chairs, white boards, display boards, flip charts and markers. TV / video and overhead projector are available on request.

Capacity: 24 Classroom; 16 Seminar



### Dining Hall

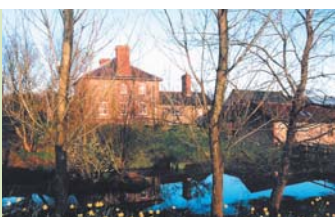
Like a farmhouse kitchen, the dining hall is the heart of Magdalen - an airy high ceilinged room opening directly on to the courtyard garden, offering a warm, welcoming space for eating, meeting and relaxing. Delicious, wholesome meals for up to 120 people are prepared by our master chef, using locally sourced and farm produce wherever possible.

Capacity: 60 Dining; 120 Buffet; 60 Classroom / Theatre



### Bedrooms

Eight comfortable, simply furnished bedrooms are arranged in three sections, each with shower, WC and wheelchair access. Up to 36 guests can be accommodated. Linen and towels are provided.



### Games Room

The oldest part of the centre provides space for a pool table and table tennis. Adjacent to which is our small shop selling a variety of ecological products, organic sweets and a few homegrown products.



### Eco-Campsite

Our eco-campsite offers an exciting opportunity to spend some time living close to nature, sleeping in two and three-man tents, cooking over open fires, using solar-heated water and eco-friendly loos.

Capacity: 50 Camping

### Teepee

From spring 2004 we will have a large teepee for use for parties or gatherings situated in the camp ground.



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## the farm and gardens

an inspiring and flexible range of facilities adaptable for a wide range of group and courses



The 132 acres of Magdalen's fields, woods and pastures provide a unique resource for adventure and discovery.

### Facilities include:

- 1 mile of meandering river frontage
- Forest garden
- Soft fruit garden
- Wildlife ponds
- Withy beds and willow-weaving
- Orchard planted with traditional West Country varieties
- Wildlife-rich hedgerows, haymeadows and watermeadows
- Story telling area
- Farm walk
- Woodland trails
- 20 acre small holding with pigs, chickens, sheep, edible flowers and organic vegetables
- Polytunnels - feel free to explore and see what you'll be eating for supper!
- Beautiful views across the Axe valley

### Gardens

A sheltered courtyard planted with fragrant herbs provides the ideal place to relax after a hard day's work. Many groups also use it as a teaching space, along with the Orchard and the Forest Garden, which illustrates an alternative system of sustainable food growing. A demonstration garden for schools is also under construction, offering opportunities for volunteering, horticulture and creative art.





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## primary: KS 1 & 2

we believe that learning should be an adventure: the lessons we learn through discovering or creating something ourselves are not only the most exciting, but the most enduring



The 132 acre outdoor classroom at the Magdalen Project offers a safe and stimulating environment for learning, both through carefully structured courses supporting the national curriculum, and through encouraging children to experience and explore that environment for themselves.



We can welcome groups for visits of half a day up to a fortnight, providing a fully catered and tutored programme which can be tailored exactly to your needs. Courses include:

### Survival in the wild

This very popular course focuses on how early Britons might have lived in the valley many thousands of years ago. We discuss types of tools, food and building materials; form tribes and paint our faces; construct shelters in the wild woods and eat sausages cooked over a fire.



### Earth passengers

This innovative course encourages children to explore the secrets of nature, and gives their discoveries expression in art and poetry. First we engage all the senses - looking, listening, smelling, tasting and especially feeling: walking barefoot and blindfolded through the meadow provides an unforgettable sensory experience. The children write poems about what they have learnt, make sculptures from natural materials and working in groups, design a collage or poster about their Magdalen Adventure.



### Farming for the future

Using the farm as a model, we investigate how a farm system works and its relationship to the natural world around it. We consider how different farming methods have different relationships with nature. We map out food chains and the land-use of the farm. During the day, the children will meet pigs, sheep and chickens and join in practical farming tasks such as feeding animals, gathering vegetables and collecting eggs.



### Living history

This is learning by doing at its most vivid and enjoyable - a chance to spend a day living as an Ancient Greek or Roman, a Saxon or a Viking. The activities cover food and cooking; clothing, including spinning and dyeing; building techniques; methods of writing; and making or decorating pottery and mosaics.





## Renewable energies and sustainability

We identify renewable and non-renewable resources and carry out an energy audit of the centre, paying particular attention to electricity generated by solar panels. We locate the best site for a wind turbine, create a solar oven, drink sun tea or use a solar panel to make music.

## Together we stand, divided we fall - team building

Learning to work with others in a co-operative way is a skill we all need. Through a series of imaginative team challenges we will experience a variety of problems to solve, testing our leadership and group skills along the way. This is a great day full of laughter, frustration and fulfilment, learning very relevant skills easily transferable to classroom and playground situations.



## Eco-explorers

We spend the day walking to the coast, learning about the various landforms, the history of the landscape and the local wildlife as we go. Our way takes us along ancient tracks and green lanes to an iron age fort, where we stop to have lunch and to gasp at a breathtaking view over three counties. In the afternoon, we navigate along the course of several streams to reach the sea, and end the day with a welcome paddle and games on the beach.

## Indian braves

The Native Americans lived lightly on the land, and by spending a day living like an Indian brave and learning their ways, we can discover many important lessons about ecology and sustainability. We start the day in our teepee, learn about observing and mapping nature, about the importance of water and fire, and the ecosystem of forest. We build shelters, go tracking, make dream catchers, and gather round the campfire, Indian style, singing and telling stories.



## Rivers and streams

The river Axe and its tributaries provide an ideal resource to compare the width, depth and speed of rivers. We observe the processes of erosion, transportation and deposition at work, test for water quality and discover the plants and animals living in the water.

## Darwin Day

All kinds of tiny creatures live in the soil, under rotten logs and in ponds. The children find them, identify them and compare them. How are they different? How are they adapted to live where they do? What do they eat? Who eats them? A fascinating exploration of little creatures and bigger issues.



## Jurassic journey

The Dorset Heritage Coast provides memorable illustrations of how natural processes have shaped coastal environments, from the teeming rock pools of Lyme Regis to the towering sedimentary cliffs of West Bay. Our exploration takes in cliff formations, rocks and fossils, marine life, sea defences, beach-combing, sand sculpture - and of course, ice cream!

## Maps and mapping

Starting with map lines, a native American from of mapping, children progressively build up their mapping skills, ending the day with compasses. We cover co-ordinates, microparks, land-use mapping and symbols and keys. We plan an adventure walk, and test our new skill with some practical orienteering.



## Village journey

This is a course of particular value to groups from urban environments. Children are invited to explore the neighbouring villages of Winsham and Thorncombe, interview local people and visit the local primary school. They compare and contrast this community with their own school and home environments. They also think about how the village has changed over time, and how it might change in the future.

Our courses are enriched with exciting activities such as: adventure picnics, basic bushcraft, building iron age huts, willow sculpture, scarecrow making, story-telling and drama. **Evening activities include:** Magdalen quidditch, campfire music, exploring by night, eco-warriors and orienteering.



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## muck & magic

KS 3 flexible taster breaks combining geography, citizenship, team-building, farming and environmental studies



Flexible weekends or short breaks to enable youngsters an opportunity to experience the environmental, learn through practical activities and have lots of fun. Whether they need a first experience of geography fieldwork, bond as a team or deserve a few days away these short breaks are flexible to suit your needs. Design your own course which we will facilitate from the day and half day activity menu below:



**Geography fieldwork** - develop skills with fun fieldwork with one of a number of options including hydrology, agriculture water quality and soils, settlements, renewable energy and audits and micro climates.

**Sustainable building** - use cob / wattle and daub to help construct our round house



**Eco gardening** - create pathways, raised beds, forest gardens and herb spirals from recycled bottles

**Survival in the wild** - learn through bush craft, form tribes, build shelters, light fires with a spark and cook lunch in the woods



**Organic farming** - help out with chickens and pigs, pickling and planting vegetables

**Ready, Steady, Cook** - race against another team and the clock learning the art of creative cooking, picking some of the food directly from the farm

**Team building** - develop the essential elements of working together through problem solving activities, trust games and group challenges



**Eco-adventures** - plan and lead a trek from the farm to the beach with lunch at an iron age hill fort on the way

**Conservation** - learn countryside skills and contribute to environmental management. Build stiles, paths, bridges or help contain the river with willow spillings.

**Organic Sculpture and Natural Art** - make paint and brushes, create sculptures, weave willow, dye and spin wool.



Bring lots of energy.

Have lots of fun.



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## global citizenship

Global citizenship is more than the sum of its parts. It is an acknowledgement of our responsibilities both to each other and the earth itself



Every school has slightly different requirements, therefore our citizenship programmes are designed to your specific brief, lasting from a few hours up to a week. Many of these activities are both new and stimulating informing through the key elements of Knowledge and Understanding, Skills, Values and Attitudes.



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## what our visitors think.... comments from school groups



'I know by their excitement and energy that they will never forget this summer camp: you really provided a year's quota of 'awe and wonder'. Without exception, all of the children and adults would wish to come again - tomorrow.'

*Ex Ofsted Inspector, Headteacher Somerset primary school*

'I would like to thank you for providing such an enjoyable, stimulating educational experience at Magdalen Farm. The children responded well to your teaching, which demonstrated considerable skill and expertise and the staff greatly appreciated your diligence, enthusiasm and subject knowledge.'

*Head Teacher, London junior school*

'All the food was brilliant, but the most mouth-watering was on Wednesday with that lovely pasta bake. I took seconds and thirds and I thought it can't get better than this. Suddenly cake comes in, it was soft smooth and delicious.'

*David, year 6*

'I enjoyed the eco-warriors game best. It was fun when we got wet. And the campfire was really cool. I like how you lit it. Oh and leaning how to survive in the woods in our tribes.'

*Jessica, year 5*

'The diverse range of field sites, the standard of teaching, depth of knowledge and flexible approach to our needs has made this a very rewarding week for both staff and students. We look forward to returning next year.'

*Head of Geography, Berkshire secondary school*

'The range of field work opportunities and relevant days on offer were spot on for our students course work, which was backed up by their much improved results. It is so refreshing to have so many fieldwork sites on the doorstep and not have to spend long journeys on a coach.'

*Head of Geography, Surrey secondary school*

Existing Schools who visit The Magdalen Project include:

Trull Primary School, Somerset  
Norton Fitzwarren School, Somerset  
Malorees Primary School, Westminster  
St. Aloysius Junior School, Camden  
Netley Junior School, Camden  
Dunannie School, Hampshire  
East Huntspill School, Somerset

Pangbourne College, Berkshire  
Aylesbury High School for Girls, Bucks  
Sir William Borlase's Grammar School, Bucks  
Wallington School for Boys, Sutton  
Nonsuch High School for Girls, Sutton  
Kings Norton School, Birmingham