

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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teambuilding

Leadership, Change Management & Personal Development



Do you want to improve the motivation and productivity of your staff team? What makes for success in business? Good Luck? Good Products? Certainly. But the factors that make the biggest difference are the skills, knowledge and commitment of the team. Both can be developed through training - to the benefit of the business and the individual alike.



At Magdalen, we offer a series of training courses, not just for management, but for the entire working team. With our professional facilitators, we use the varied resources of Magdalen's extensive land holdings and our relaxing seminar rooms to introduce new styles of working and focusing on specific issues relating to your team. Theory sessions are backed up by imaginative practical problem solving exercises. All our activities are designed to challenge each participant to work together as a team both physically and mentally.



course content

Most of the exercises are carried out in groups. Problems are set, to which there is no right or wrong answer: the group has to decide what is to be done, how, and by whom. Together they make decisions, agree goals, negotiate changes, measure results. Exercises address:

- Negotiating with others - achieving win / win outcomes
- Solving problems as a group - brainstorming, planning and agreeing goals, negotiating, delegating and measuring success
- Effective teamwork - building trust, co-operation and communication
- Ownership and responsibility
- Finding the appropriate leadership style
- Maintaining motivation
- Developing successful relationships - the value of mutual respect



Free of the constraints of the workplace, individuals are encouraged to be more open, experimental and adventurous in their approach. And although the exercises are intended to be fun, the dilemmas they explore and the skills they develop are real and transferable to the workplace.



Programmes can vary from half a day to three days. All courses are individually designed to meet your requirements. Groups who have participated in our team-building days include: Screwfix, Westland Helicopters, Magna Housing Association, various NHS Trusts, Local Authorities and Educational Establishments.