

Resting in the rhythms of nature...



This year we have celebrated 25 years of Quiet Gardens, with thousands of people over that time finding space for prayer, rest, and reflection. Some happen across Quiet Gardens in their day-to-day life and others visit as part of an organised retreat or group. Many will have found the garden to be a safe space

in a period of trouble, ill health or grieving, and for others, as part of their rhythm of following Jesus' call to take time out and get some rest (Mark 6:31).

It may sometimes feel that modern life has moved us further from engaging with the rhythms of nature over the last quarter century. We can feel separation from the cycles of planting, growing, harvesting, dormancy (or resting) inherent in the gardening year. However, during this time, there has also been a growth in understanding of the benefit to emotional, spiritual and physical wellbeing that time in the natural world provides.

There has also been a growing interest in the contemplative tradition over this time, and a rising awareness of mindfulness in many, often unexpected, settings. As a result there are still many people, of any faith or none, seeking to rest in nature, where they can discover a sense of peace, wellbeing and deepening spirituality.

Whether in open and wild landscapes, or a humble garden, our connection to nature and its seasons act as constant reminders of the stories of faith. Most obviously, the death and resurrection of Jesus is experienced every time a seed is planted, buried in its earthy grave, and we wait in anticipation for the moment it bursts into new life. We read about the faithfulness of God to Israel in the wilderness, and experience something of that every time we watch the rainfall nourishing the planted seeds. We read about the miracle of the fish and loaves, and experience a miracle when we are overwhelmed by the generosity of the harvest. The rhythms of each season remind and teach us anew.

During the Winter months much of the natural world draws deep into itself and prepares to rest. Trees retract their sap and drop their leaves. Animals retreat for hibernation, and birds flee the cold. This is the time when we too naturally slow down and reflect. It is a time for rest, to look inwards and wait for the new beginnings and depths of understanding to be birthed once again.

Matt Freer, QG Development/Projects Manager

Whether we've never been to a Quiet Garden before, or are part of a QG hosting team, we all need time to withdraw, reflect and refresh ourselves. With that in mind we hope that you will consider joining us for the following:

Seeking enchantment in a Quiet Garden landscape

Annual Gathering

28 April 2018

at St George's, Worcester, UK
Exploring how we find enchantment in the natural landscape, with **Rt Revd Graham Usher**, Bishop of Dudley and author of *Places of Enchantment – Meeting God In Landscapes*.

For details and to book visit www.quietgarden.org/AG2018

Quiet25 Retreat

28-29 March 2018

at Holland House, nr Evesham, UK
The Quiet Garden Movement's **first residential retreat**.

Matt Freer and Tina Jefferies, authors of the Quiet25 Course, will lead you through exercises and practices exploring silence providing you with time to retreat, rest, and connect with others.

For details and to book visit www.quietgarden.org/quiet25-retreats

Further details for both events are also available by calling the office on 01494 578909

Quiet Gardens - sharing outdoor space for the inner journey.

The Quiet Garden Movement nurtures low cost, accessible, outdoor space for prayer, contemplation, rest and inspiration in a variety of settings such as private homes, churches, schools and hospitals.

God is in the Garden: Celebrating 25 years of Quiet Gardens in May 2017

At the Anniversary Gathering in London thanks were given for all those involved over the past 25 years, especially founder Revd Philip Roderick who retired as Director. Philip reminisced with Noreen Cooper, host of the first Quiet Garden, about the discernment, prayerfulness and joy of the birth and growth of the community of the Quiet Garden Movement. Philip said "As we pray, we become interconnected - like strawberry runners - though even more invisible and delicate than that. There comes into being a delicate membrane of prayerfulness. We are delighted to link people who love gardens, love green, love prayer, love God, love the neighbour, love the quest, love the activity and love the passivity. And that's what we're engaged in. ... Of course, we are all really only conduits. The whole process is very little to do with me or you. It is how God works - the Spirit broods over the face of the earth and will drop seeds of potential for people, for each of us. And as we respond to those little nudges, then something wonderful will happen. There's a consistent renewal of this vision, renewal of energy, renewal of gifting." The practical outworking of this was illustrated in talks from Quiet Garden hosts offering Quiet Gardens.

Two keynote speakers shared their perspective on Quiet Gardens. Revd Andrew Walker spoke from his experience, particularly of Ignatian spirituality and as a gardening volunteer, on the parallels between the spiritual life and gardening and how they can inform each other. In the 16th century St Teresa of Avila compared spiritual growth with the watering of the garden. Andrew offered us 5 parallels for today - collaboration, discipline, artistry, a little foolishness and reversal (seeing



things differently to the norm). He then guided us in a visualisation meditation imagining ourselves in a walled garden.

After Andrew's talk we moved outside into the garden for a time of body prayer led by Philip.

Revd Lucy Winkett began with 'in quietness is your strength' or fearlessness. She commented on the lack of silence in our world – manmade noise and busyness – and that Quiet Gardens are offering something radical and countercultural. Quiet Gardens provide the environment for courageously turning from inner distractions to quietness before God. "So our fundamental spiritual activity in quietness is not so much progressing and moving forwards, or improving, or even learning, ... (but) turning back, returning again towards the light, turning again towards the One who made me and loves me, into the endlessly generative and creative source of life and grace. ... The journey into quietness brings us into inevitable conflict with the overweening confidence we have in our own ability. ... We become more courageous to face ourselves as we are, as God sees us, and to learn to live without knowledge, without condemnation, or fantasy. ... It's not just about rest or whiling away a pleasant afternoon, this kind of authentic, quiet spirituality can be the



preparation, the tilling of the soil inside us that will stand up to injustice and proclaim a new world that Christ puts before us every hour of every day. So ... we're called back ... perhaps to the silence of a quiet garden in order to deepen our vocation to live fully as fearless children of God."

These are only snippets from a day of wonder, joy and renewing friendships. Please do visit www.quietgarden.org/AG2017 for transcripts and recordings

Garden Service in Angatorp Quiet Garden, Sweden

On the sunny Sunday, the 9th of July 2017, about 80-90 people gathered in Angatorp QG for an ecumenical garden service. In the beginning of the service, Karin Engstrand told the history of The Quiet Garden Movement, how gardens opened for people who wanted a quiet place to pray, meditate and seek God. Angatorp QG has been affiliated to the QGM for two years but this was the official opening. The garden and the house are open once a month for retreat days.

Karin brought greetings and news from the opening of The Emmaus Garden in Chatham just a week before. Karin had attended the opening as a friend of Rev. Madeleine Dahl, the host of that new garden.

Friends of Karin sang, read poems and words from the Bible and the congregation sang many of the beautiful summer hymns. The Vicar in Vårgårda pastorat, Esbjorn Sardqvist, gave the sermon on the theme for the Sunday: Do not judge. The cantor finished the service with "Summersong" by W Petterson-Berger. Afterwards people sat down enjoying their picnic coffee and walked around among the roses talking to each other.

*Karin Engstrand
Angatorp Quiet Garden, Sweden*



Picnic at Angatorp QG

St Josephs QG Derby share some practical and prayer steps in setting up a new Quiet Garden

The team set up to work on the Quiet Garden includes our parish safeguarding representative and we have applied the Nottingham Diocesan criteria to the Quiet Garden Project. The person who tends the garden completed an information leaflet about the garden and has placed warning notices where there may be potential hazards. The site is in places a sloping one but every effort is made to prevent anyone coming to harm. We have been promoting the garden in the parish and many parishioners volunteer their time to help which makes it a community in action.



With our Parish Priest we decided to approach this opportunity for contemplative prayer by advertising small retreats in July, August and September initially for parishioners. This is about people who may all be at different starting points becoming comfortable with contemplative prayer. Our theme has centred on the lines of the hymn 'Be Still and Know that I am God', followed by 'I Am The Lord That Healeth Thee', followed by 'In Thee O Lord I Put My Trust'. It has been difficult to discern how directive to be, to support people. We gave people some written material in the form of quotations whilst suggesting they may or may not want to use it.

The suggestions from the Quiet Garden team have been helpful and I have enjoyed going back over old favourites and becoming acquainted with new ones. Our first retreat was not well attended even though we made use of the church building, bringing the garden inside and using the parish centre for refreshments when it rained. However we are all ready to go again.

*Kathleen Elliot
St Joseph's Quiet Garden, Derby*

Visit to Wellgate Quiet Garden, Morebattle, Eastern Borders of Scotland



On 20th May 2017, the Rev Bob King, rector of the Episcopal Church of Scotland led 12 of us through a celebration of the seven days of Creation. Of course, we had intended this to be celebrated in the garden, but the Almighty deemed it high time the thirsty crops of this fertile piece of South East Scotland got a satisfactory watering. And so it rained. At moments it rained quite spectacularly.

We assembled in the music room, just fitting in, and after a lovely weather-orientated blessing, printed below, Matilda and Douglas explained how they had altered the steep slope, the wide grass sweep, now bound in a circle of yew hedge (all the plants had been found in the garden); the fistful of proffered box seedlings which were now the uneven parterres; and how nature (or God) and rich manse soil had done the rest.

Two separate readings of each of the Days of Creation were read out, to start with the first two days. Lightness and dark were then the theme for exploring all the pictures in the house (bathrooms included). We returned. After a brief discussion the next two days of creation were read to us. The rain obligingly stopped, so out we stepped, between showers to savour all the senses, including those sweet Scottish spring scents of post-rain grass and azaleas, of geraniums and bluebells. We retreated for picnic lunch supplemented by large pieces of Christine Tucker's chocolate cake and returned to listen to the readings for the last three Days, our senses more alert than before, perhaps. We have enjoyed each other's companionship and the peace of the manse and its garden, here at Wellgate.

We think, we know, some people will return when the sun shines. The garden is always open on Fridays and Sundays.

The Gaelic Blessing

May the road rise up to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back
May the sun shine warm upon your face
The rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.

*Matilda Hall
Wellgate QG, Scotland*

The Chapel Gardens at the George Eliot Hospital NHS Trust, Nuneaton

Hospitals are intense places at the best of times; we all need spaces where we can breathe more easily, where we can remember that we are part of a bigger natural world. We have two gardens by the hospital chapel which had become massively overgrown and infested with brambles. When we were given a donation as a 'debt of gratitude' for care received, we put it towards renewing the gardens. As we began to work, so others saw what we were doing and wanted to contribute to it. The donations were added to, nearly all of them given in memory of loved ones who were cared for here, and who would have loved these garden spaces.



Garden designer Anna McArthur, with Sid Bibby Landscapers, built on the shape and ethos of the original gardens but made them more accessible to anyone in the hospital. As the weeks have passed, the garden has been a bit like a slow firework display, different colours bursting forth and causing us quite often to gasp in wonder. The speed at which the plants have settled and grown has astonished us. And we have been so delighted to see people inhabit the spaces - staff, relatives, outpatients and inpatients. In the summer the staff on ITU brought down a patient in his bed. A woman whose husband had just died on one of the wards, said, "This is the last place we came out together. I just wanted to be here for a while."

It's not finished. Maybe a garden never is finished. Through October we have been planting hundreds of bulbs and there is still more to do. We are delighted to be part of the Quiet Garden Movement, and look forward to developing this quiet space at the heart of the hospital.

Revd Ricarda Witcombe, Chaplain

PATRONS OF THE QUIET GARDEN MOVEMENT

Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia	The Rt Revd John Pritchard
Margaret Magdalen Evening	Professor Sir Ghillean Prance
Richard Foster	Margaret Silf
Terry Hershey	The Revd Lucy Winkett
His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols	

FOUNDER: Revd Philip Roderick

Welcoming New Quiet Gardens

Australia

Open Door, Queensland

Canada

St. John's Parish of March, Ontario

England

All Saints Church, Wimbledon, London
 Bolton St James Community Garden, West Yorks
 Chapel Gardens George Eliot Hospital, Nuneaton
 Foxley House, Dorset
 Holy Rood House, North Yorkshire
 Little Detton, Shropshire
 Meadow House, Derbyshire
 Mossrigg, West Yorkshire
 Sherwood Methodist Church, Nottinghamshire
 St Josephs, Derby
 Spring Cottage, Bedfordshire
 Teg Gwelva, Cornwall
 The Blue Idol Quaker Meeting House, West Sussex
 The Emmaus Garden, Kent
 The Prayer Garden at The Dell Centre, Surrey
 Tremorran - Back to the Garden, Cornwall
 Under the Oak, Surrey
 Woodlea, County Durham

USA

Gardens of the Soul, Pennsylvania
 Trinity Episcopal Church Sonoma, California

From the Quiet Garden at Fishbourne:

We are delighted that:

Philip Roderick,

Founder of the Quiet Garden Movement, will lead a reflective morning within the theme of 'Wholeness' entitled

Resting in a Garden

After the activity, the pause.

See what's growing.

Celebrate the senses.

Wait on the presence of God.

from 10am to 12.30pm

on Tuesday 24th April 2018

at St Peter's Place,

attached to Fishbourne Parish Church.

With a bring-and-share lunch afterwards

For further information please contact

Jane Bingeman on 01243-776223

www.quietgarden.org/fishbourne

If you'd like to receive this newsletter regularly, or no longer wish to - please contact us
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