

God is in the Garden, God is in the House

A delightful element of our Quiet Garden ministry is its everyday nature. When a homeowner offers their garden space on a regular or occasional basis, they often make available an inside area too. Hospitality is a spirituality of welcome; the opening of the heart both to the loving presence of God and to the Quiet Garden visitor.

The Holy Spirit reveals the extraordinary in the ordinary. From the very beginning, as the book of Genesis tells, God's primary setting for engagement and encounter is the garden. Green space can be offered up to God. We gather in a garden setting to be blessed and invited deeper into the quiet grace of God.

This is holy ground – as God is brought into focus in home and garden. For a few hours people are encouraged and supported to make space for prayer and wonder, rest and renewal. When a Quiet Garden is in a more permanent place – church, retreat centre, prison, hospital or school, then this again is a reminder to all who visit of the shalom of God which passes all understanding. We have so much to receive, so much to share, and all in the name of the risen Christ.



Roses at Harbour Haven QG, New Zealand



Quilt made for a Quiet Garden in Tonbridge, Kent to illustrate God's presence both in the house and garden, and in the movement between the two.

*The Revd Philip Roderick
Founder-Director of
The Quiet Garden Movement*

Quiet Garden at RHS Malvern Spring Show in UK 8 – 11 May 2014

We are delighted that garden designer, Angie Turner, has offered to create a Show Garden focussing on Quiet Gardens. Afterwards the garden will go to a school. Please watch the website for progress.

You can be involved by sponsoring the garden. For example
£5 for a perennial
£20 for a shrub
£30 towards a tree
£120 for a whole tree
£20 - £50 towards the building work
£100 towards sculpture

Please contact The Quiet Garden Trust office (details at foot of page 4)

Annual Gathering on Saturday 21st June 2014 at St Mary's Church, Ely, Cambridgeshire, UK

Guest speaker, Revd Christopher McKenna speaking about

“The Place of Contemplative Prayer and Silence in Mental Health and Well-being.”

Details & booking form available from The Quiet Garden Trust Office

Those who visit, or offer, Quiet Gardens, intuitively know that time spent in silence is beneficial to mental health. Revd Christopher McKenna is Director of St Marylebone Healing and Counselling Centre in London and has a longstanding interest in the psychological understanding of religious experience.

The primary vision of The Quiet Garden Trust is to initiate and resource a network of local opportunities for prayer, silence, reflection and the appreciation of beauty; for learning about Christian life and spirituality; for experiencing creativity and healing in the context of God's love.

Living on the Edge

Celtic tradition has an expression "a thin place" to describe when the veil between earth and heaven seems gossamer thin. This summer I was in such a place, the Outer Hebrides – a place of rugged beauty and ever-changing weather reflected in sky and sea, not to mention the rocks of many colours testifying to a fascinating geological history. It was exhilarating!

Prior to 2011, the Quiet Garden Movement had no formal presence on the islands but now there are two Quiet Gardens! Jane Knight living in a hamlet tucked away on the island of Harris, leads a life of dedicated prayer. Her home exemplifies both enclosure and openness. The contained garden (often a metaphor for the inner transformed life) is balanced by openness to the needy world. The gate in Jane's cliff-top fence is thus truly significant, leading from the carefully crafted garden with plants which will withstand winds and thin soils, out onto the wild headland.



During my stay, I was able to visit the new Quiet Garden on Lewis: indeed so new that the opening event was the evening of my visit. Two dozen people enjoyed pizza warmed in the outdoor bread oven, the delights of the art studio, and the ribbon-cutting across the garden gate! Peter Harlington, a professional gardener, has worked hard to create an attractive garden complete with flower boxes, sheltered seating area and a little bothy for an overnight!

These two Quiet Gardens will complement each other well. The one on Lewis is on a popular tourist route so there are always people passing by. Peter and Jane Harlington offer a listening ear and a Quiet Garden seat.....but here Peter will take up the story.....

Mollie Robinson
Quiet Garden Coordinator

Details of Jane's colourful painted cards showing the gate and garden in different seasons are available from the Resources section of the Quiet Garden website
<http://www.quietgarden.org/books.html>

Jane Knight's Quiet Garden in Harris was the catalyst for me to dedicate an area of my own space to inspire and share specifically with those seeking to step outside the normal bustle and noise of everyday life.

I have always loved the concept of the cloistered garden and the previous work to build an agricultural shed and art studio had left a quadrangle of space, sheltered and enclosed that already contained a pump and a well, a source of physical water, around which I have created a space simply to be.

A new raised shed has been built into the bank, our "meditation" shed, an outside place of shelter and momentary refuge. This has been enjoyed by visitors to the art studio who take their tea and retreat inside for a few moments of quiet reflection. It also provides a place of meeting for the village youngsters who loiter with no intent other than to congregate and chat.

The flower beds have matured since Mollie's visit and have been much admired and are a source of cut flowers. Recently two small girls spent a happy afternoon decorating the shed with single stems placed in old glass jars and bottles; it was, they said, the highlight of their visit.

It is early days for us, but a Winter Quiet Day lies ahead and once again the bread oven will be lit and this small space will provide a focus for congregation and fellowship.

Peter Harlington
The Blue Pig Studio,
Carloway, Isle of Lewis



Friends' Lunch

Friends of The Quiet Garden Movement met recently over an informal lunch. Revd Philip Roderick (Founder-Director) welcomed us and it was hosted by Revd Sue Nightingale (Chair of Trustees) and David Barratt (retired Trustee). The splendid room at the Royal Overseas League overlooking Green Park in London, was filled with lively conversation as new connections were made and ideas shared.

It was the first time the Friends had met in this way and we were blessed with sunshine and many happy coincidences. Two Friends have just opened a garden in Chichester and another member was looking for just such a garden in – guess where – Chichester!

We hope that the ideas seeded here may germinate and help Quiet Gardens to flourish.



Friends' Lunch in London

Friends of The Quiet Garden Movement

Do you value and share our vision?
Would you like to deepen your links with us?

Friends support us in several ways such as through prayer, finance and volunteering.

Further information is available from
The Quiet Garden Trust office.



The Chapel, Schoenstatt & St John Fisher

Schoenstatt Quiet Garden in Kearsley, Lancashire

People tell us that it isn't easy to find, nonetheless more and more find their way down a quiet avenue leading off the busy Manchester Road, and their first reaction is "Wow! We didn't expect that!" The avenue ends in a car park bordered by buildings and verdant green, while the eye is led beyond a quaint little chapel to the mountains in the distance. The sound of the traffic has almost disappeared and the visitor is surrounded by silence, the whisper of the breeze (and there is always a breeze), and birdsong.

It is time to explore. You may find men and women in yellow jackets busily at work. These are the community payback team learning how to run a garden. Their supervisor is their instructor, and they are working towards an NVQ in horticulture.

You will be drawn almost magnetically to the little chapel, an unexpected "jewel" transported from the banks of the River Rhine, Germany. It is an exact copy of the little chapel where the Schoenstatt Movement started in October 1914. The shrine is always open and everyone is welcome. As you walk round the back of the shrine you will see that it overlooks the Irwell Valley, and on clear days you can pick out well-known landmarks with the Pennines on the horizon to the right. As your gaze sweeps over the landscape, you will see the Moors that lead onward to the Lake District.

The extensive gardens include a work in progress: the Mosaic Peace Garden situated on the sloping lawn behind the multi-purpose hall/church, which is used also by the community at large. More benches will be added to the garden. The church is open and its facilities and kitchen are at the service of our visitors. There is always someone to talk to in the house opposite the church, but we want visitors to feel free to explore and enjoy the peace if that is what they want. Everyone is very welcome!

Mary Cole
Schoenstatt & St John Fisher

Sentinels upon the world's frontier

Twenty years ago our first hermitage had no garden just a field shared with Jacob's sheep - but this wild meadow had its own beauty and purpose... a vision for where we now are.

God's vision for the world where the lion lies down with the lamb will take longer but forms part of our ministry of hidden prayer. Creation continues to groan in its labour pains (Romans 8:22) but it's the very place where we most easily see God's hand as Thomas Merton wrote:

'O land alive with miracles...
Lift your blue trees into the sun!
O country wild with talent...'

The walled garden, our cloister, echoes his words accompanied by willow warblers chanting their own 'timid vaudeville' Those who visit, whether they come from a Christian perspective or through the various paths of their own traditions, find monastic hospitality encouraging them to look deeper. For here, silence becomes the teacher... bringing an awareness of God already within.

Our contemplative outreach is inspired by the wisdom of contemporary monks like Richard Rohr, Tom Keating and William Menninger. The Hermitage, affiliated to The Quiet Garden Movement, offers a place conducive to contemplative prayer but not contemplative prayer for itself... for it returns us to work more effectively in all that we do... it helps restore balance, it's transformative, so that we can live ordinary lives with extraordinary love... eventually, given time, through positive action it may also heal our broken world.

Merton again sums up our vocation, "Night is our diocese, silence our ministry... we are exiles in the far end of solitude... planted like sentinels upon the world's frontier." Flowery? Yes, but it fits our garden where we also recognise that, 'if action is the stream – then contemplation is the spring.'

Lance and Sue Blake
The Fenland Hermitage, Lincolnshire



The Walled Garden at The Fenland Hermitage

Leave a gift in your Will

You can help secure the future of The Quiet Garden Trust through a legacy. If you would like to discuss this, please contact The Quiet Garden Trust Office.

PATRONS OF THE QUIET GARDEN TRUST

Richard Foster
Gerard W. Hughes, S.J.
Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia
Margaret Magdalen Evening
The Most Revd Vincent Nichols
Professor Sir Ghilleain Prance
The Rt Revd John Pritchard

Eric Robson Founder Trustee

Twenty years ago, The Quiet Garden Trust was formed to nurture the embryonic Quiet Garden Movement into life. The founding Trustees included a man of faith, vision and energy, an encourager – Eric Robson.

Eric died earlier this year and a Memorial Service celebrated his gifts in initiating local projects with a Christian ethos. These included home care for the dying and a home for the elderly which are both highly valued in the community today.

Eric would be delighted that The Quiet Garden Movement has blossomed into a worldwide Movement with over 300 Quiet Gardens.

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