

In this edition we share news from the grassroots of the Quiet Garden Movement, as well as a focus on labyrinths. Many Quiet Gardens feature labyrinths, which come in all shapes and sizes.

Earlier this year a group of all ages I was hosting at our home made a temporary labyrinth. We created it in 20 minutes using freshly cut bracken to create the pattern in a field, and then spent 30 minutes walking it together in silence. Some of us walked it quickly, others slowly, some stayed in the centre longer than others, whilst the younger of us weaved in and out of the older ones and walked or half ran. At the end of our time together we left the labyrinth to disappear naturally, and within a fortnight there was no sign of it ever being there. It was so simple and yet such a deep experience: an example of the impact of simple temporary creative space for silence, particularly one created and experienced together as a group.



Please read on for news from Quiet Gardens around the world. You will also find more news and resources on our website, including talks from our 2018 Annual Gathering and our recently updated strategy, as well as the opportunity to sign up to receive our news by email. Visit: www.quietgardens.org

Matt Freer, Development/Projects Manager



What is a Labyrinth? An exploration

by Angela Steele, Quiet Garden host, Spring Cottage QG, Bedfordshire, UK

Have you ever walked a labyrinth?

What are the differences between mazes and labyrinths?

A maze is to lose yourself, with a choice of many paths and the aim is to reach the goal, which can cause anxiety. A labyrinth is to find yourself and a journey on a single path that is seen which engenders calm and confidence. Both have ancient origins of 4000 years, the earliest are found on Petroglyphs as cup and ring rock carvings in the North of England and Scotland.

Inspired by walking the lovely labyrinth of Chartres Cathedral, it has been a fascinating spiritual and practical journey to building a small one in the Quiet Garden of Spring Cottage to enhance meditation, a sense of peace and fun!

(continued on page 2)

Annual Gathering at St Mark's Quiet Garden, Haydock, Merseyside on Saturday 11 May 2019

Join us for our Annual Gathering and experience the community Quiet Garden at St Mark's Haydock,

Explore the practice of mindfulness with Tim Stead, author of '*See, Love, Be: Mindfulness and the spiritual life*' and '*Mindfulness and Christian Spirituality: Making space for God*'.

This is a day for everyone involved in Quiet Gardens and anyone who is interested in visiting one for the first time.

For further details and to book visit www.quietgarden.org/AG2019

Quiet Gardens - sharing outdoor space for wellbeing and 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.

What is a labyrinth? continued

In a world where so many people live in imbalance resulting in stress, illness, a distorted view of the world and relationships, labyrinths can restore a sense of equilibrium. The walking back and forth taking right and left turns apparently does something to balance the two halves of our brain. Moving the body stills the mind, so 'take a stroll with your soul'. Because the path is easy to follow, the walker is in a more relaxed state, remaining alert to following the path or giving way to others but concentrating on the path they are on. There are turns where you can stop and contemplate your surroundings.

There is no right or wrong way to walk a labyrinth but these are some ways to approach it

- * Children and adults 'playing' on it
- * Enter it with an empty mind and just let thoughts come into your mind without forcing anything.
- * Go in with a problem and walk out of it with a solution
- * Use the Lord's prayer in sections
- * Repeat the walking of the labyrinth, as this will let you go deeper repetition is a good thing

It can be useful in grief work, with one person finding the walk out of the labyrinth was shorter than the walk into it, which made her think about time and insight as to what is the best age to die, who are we to judge? The potential is to find what you are seeking, it may not happen every time but if you are open to being 'open' then you are more likely to find what you are seeking.

The Chartres Cathedral Labyrinth



Built in the nave in the early 13th Century, this is just over 42 feet in diameter. The number of stones is approx 272 (some are cracked/patched), thought to be indicative of the medieval idea of the length of pregnancy; the number of turns supposedly equivalent to the years Christ lived. Geometrically, the number

7 relates to the Virgin; Chartres Cathedral is dedicated to Mary. The number 3 equals the inner world of the spirit, the soul. The physical, outer world is denoted by the number 4, 4 winds or directions, the body. In each quadrant, there are 4 turns vertically and 3 horizontally with a central station that can be seen as the heavenly Jerusalem - our ultimate journey from Earth to Heaven.

Personally, I didn't want to exit the labyrinth the first time I walked the Chartres Labyrinth and immediately went back in again. The second time was with all 16 companions within the space and it was interesting how people gave way to others, who were walking in the 'opposite' direction. We were all walking the same path, the same destination, but were at different points. Giving way going in, but others giving way to me on the way out...was this because I was more confident and stronger going out? It was the letting go, on going out, that made a weight lift from me. Each experience is different.

Labyrinths magnify our awareness and experience. I invite you to imagine 'walking' the labyrinth, pausing at each turn. How was that for you? Did you go fast, slow, frustrated, calm? Is the experience you've had, similar to a reflection of how things are for you in your real life?



Spring Cottage Labyrinth

At each half circle turn, people are invited to stop and look around, hear the sounds, and smell the smells.

The labyrinth may be seen as a substitute for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land - walking on from the 'Dragon's Tail' one can emerge into the main garden to reach the eccentric middle, the circular patio.

Building a Labyrinth

It does not need to be on a grand scale- a pebble pattern, gravel, turf maybe all that you need. The Spring Cottage labyrinth has red bricks and slabs set in concrete, infilled with alpine white chippings set in a small part of the garden that was dark and didn't grow much, orientated in an East/West orientation through the vertical.

The labyrinth revival in America, mainly of the Chartres design, has been phenomenal over decades, with the enthusiasm of Lauren Artress and Robert Ferre. There is a worldwide labyrinth locator at www.labyrinthlocator.com/home

In the UK, there are quite a few of varying designs and materials in all sorts of places. More than 30 UK Quiet Gardens offer labyrinths with 12 outside the UK. For a list of these and labyrinth resources (including a labyrinth pattern) see www.quietgarden.org/labyrinth

There are also many events centred on mazes and labyrinths, including World Labyrinth Day organised by The Labyrinth Society. Usually taking place on the first Saturday in May, it is aimed at bringing people from all over the planet together "in celebration of the labyrinth as a symbol, a tool, a passion, or a practice."



Cornish Quiet Garden shortlisted for Green Health Award

Congratulations to Paul Quiet Garden (Spaces n Between)! It was shortlisted in the Green Health Awards for creating a haven of peace which is available for church and secular activities. Display boards within the garden tell of Cornish Saints and offer the opportunity for a reflective action such as running sand through fingers or marking a cross on a slate. There is also a labyrinth. Those hosting the Quiet Garden feel sure that many who come for quiet space struggle with traditional church but find spiritual nourishment through this garden.

Community activities in the garden include a holiday club which gives children in deprived areas of Penzance a chance to experience natural green space; a gardening club for adults with learning difficulties who enjoy gardening in a peaceful place; a dementia support group for people with dementia and their carers who are refreshed by being in a quiet, calm place.

The volunteers who maintain the garden are a mix of church congregation and residents of the village – a group with strong camaraderie.

If you are in Cornwall, UK do visit and experience the Quiet Garden for yourself.

The Organic Labyrinth Stone House Cottage Quiet Garden New Zealand

Julie Robinson (Wellspring, Victoria, Australia)

I had a longing for many years to visit 'Stone House Cottage' near the tiny town of Manaia, sheltered below Mt Egmont. Our host, Rev David Self, generously invited us to stay for three nights in his cottage so that we could 'come aside and rest awhile' as Jesus taught.

David has been a keen gardener and he had a very large Nursery business years prior to becoming a priest in his 70's. His passion is begonias. He follows the way of St Benedict who is quoted as saying: 'Prayer is work and work is prayer.' David decided to put his Chapel in the midst of the large garden at the end of a glasshouse! We were privileged to have prayers at noon there one day.

The labyrinth garden is structured with flowerbeds curving around to the end where two Wiltshire sheep are penned next to the neighbour's farm with a view of Mt Egmont. Each garden bed is especially set as a place to pause and read a short meditation and suggested prayers from an illustrated booklet.

It felt like a pilgrimage to be taken very quietly and slowly. In our time there it was wonderful to go into the garden at different times of the day. We were truly refreshed and blessed.

Slow Down Breathe and Refresh – Silence and contemplation in the garden

Rachel Tainsh and Mairi Nasr, Bearsden Baptist Church, Glasgow, UK

Slow Down Breathe and Refresh is based on the Quiet25 course. We were very inspired by the Quiet25 Retreat at Holland House which we attended and were keen to try out the materials ourselves.

Each week of SDBR followed a different theme about silence. We explored different ways of anchoring ourselves, noticing but not being caught up with our 'chattering minds', using our senses to help us 'be in the moment'. We tried out different prayer exercises and learned about being alert and watchful, tuning into what God might be saying to us through nature. We spent time in silence individually and in a group. The times of group silence were particularly special and we often felt a tangible sense of peace and stillness in the shared silence.

The weather was very kind to us and each week we were able to be out in the garden. On the last evening we enjoyed a bonfire and marshmallows together. Our closing ceremony included planting sun flower seedlings reflecting on 1 Corinthians 16 "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but it was God who made the plant grow". Over the 5 weeks we saw the garden change and grow which helped us notice whether we were changing as we tried daily silent practice at home.

Comments received about the course included:

A gentle genuine, open natural way to feel that you can connect with God – thank you.

Really enjoyed the fellowship, loved the fact that it was undemanding and we just have to 'be'.

We really enjoyed running the course and were amazed and delighted how God met with us each week in special ways.

Mairi has been trying out the senses and silence exercises with Kidzone, which has gone well

*The Quiet25 course is available from the Quiet Garden office
Details at www.quietgarden.org/2017/quiet25-course/*



Quiet Gardens and the Art of Pottering

Reflections by a visitor to Plot 22, E.Sussex

One of my favourite things is pottering. So popping along to a Quiet Garden session hosted by community allotment PLOT 22 with the sole glorious purpose of pottering has been on my wish list. Having finished my dissertation, I set off with an arm full of jumpers - just in case - a book, and a flask of tea, ready to do some serious pottering.



On arrival at PLOT 22, I was welcomed by Rita, the volunteer hosting this week’s session. After doing a spot of watering together - to keep the tomatoes, chard and kale ticking over - we went our separate ways for a little while, pottering in companionable silence.

Then spotting a seat tucked away in a sun trap, I settled down to read. Sitting in the early evening sun, warm but with the whisper of an autumn chill, a flask of tea by my side, steam curling into the air, I lowered my book, closed my eyes and sighed deeply. A little way off I could hear the faint hum of traffic and, in a garden, children bouncing on a trampoline, their shouts and whoops drifting over the fences. The smell of over-ripe apples unexpectedly took me back to the garden of my childhood. Then clouds covered the sun, and I opened my eyes, smiling.

Beyond the detail, it's unlikely that anything I have to say about my experience of a Quiet Garden session will be unique, because I am discovering a growing movement of people already in the know. Quiet Gardens are restorative, refreshing, and good for the soul. And this is exactly what I experienced at PLOT 22. Without wanting to sound too fancy, being outdoors, surrounded by nature, is nothing short of a spiritual practice. It's a kind of coming home, responding to the invitation to come away to a quiet place, to rest, and perhaps potter. So what next? Surely the joy of this discovery is made complete by extending the invitation to others to be part of the Quiet Garden movement, a place and a way of being which invites true and welcome rest.

Albafarne Prayer Garden launch

Bob and Mary Bain, Albafarne Prayer Garden, Northumberland, UK

Local Councillor Elisabeth cut the ribbon. We felt it was important to connect the local council with the event as there is a community aspect to the prayer garden - 'when people make space for God, a community prospers'. So it is our prayer that a wider blessing will ripple out to the village from the time people spend here, bringing God into the conversation about themselves and their families. We asked different local ministers to contribute in the short Dedication service.

There was a real buzz over the tea and cakes at the front of the house but the garden at the rear was quiet. Guests had the opportunity to experience the prayer garden using a prayer exercise if they wished. They could wander around or sit on one of the benches.

Welcoming New Quiet Gardens

Ireland

Galilee Quiet Garden, Co Roscommon

New Zealand

Te Wa Rangimarie O Hato Ani

UK

Albafarne, Northumberland

Christ Church Garden, E. Riding Yorks

Forest Lodge, Cumbria

Hobro Lodge, Worcestershire

Monks Hall, Kent

Plot 22, East Sussex

Sebergham Hall, Cumbria

St Francis' Quiet Garden, Cardiff, Wales

St Michaels, Winchester College, Hants

St Oswalds Methley, W. Yorkshire

St Cuthbert's Way, Northumberland

The Barn at Forest Green, Surrey

The Nativity Garden, Kent

The Secret Garden Northallerton, Yorks

Tinhay Retreats, Devon

The Artist Within

Suzanne Stronge, Redstone Wood, Surrey

Helped by experienced Quiet Gardener Albert Simmans, we offered a Quiet Garden day led by Revd Iain Mckillop an artist and art-historian interested in the links between art and spirituality.

Iain Mckillop spoke about the connections to the spirit of God that produce different artistic results, using examples from artists John Linnell, Samuel Palmer and William Blake. Between each of the three talks, Iain invited us to go outside, sensitise ourselves to nature and seek the spirit of God all around us. As Albert commented "The artist experiences discovery, growth and healing as he works, and so does the observer through looking and seeing". We walked into the garden with our spirits uplifted in praise of God.

PATRONS OF THE QUIET GARDEN MOVEMENT

Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia

Margaret Magdalen Evening

Richard Foster

Terry Hershey

His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols

The Rt Revd John Pritchard

Professor Sir Ghillelan Prance

Margaret Silf

The Revd Lucy Winkett

FOUNDER: Revd Philip Roderick