

# Pause

News and views from the Quiet Garden Movement

Pentecost 2019

  
www.quietgarden.org



Photo: Christian Joudrey / Unsplash.org

## Prescribing nature

**Growing evidence suggests that nature connection boosts our physical and psychological well-being and deepens our ecological sensitivity. This won't be a surprise to many readers, nature connection is after all one of the core values of the Quiet Garden Movement, and forms the basis for much of what happens when visiting a Quiet Garden. What may surprise you is that increasingly doctors and healthcare practitioners are looking at prescribing nature connection to support mental health care.**

The prevalence of mental ill-health is on the rise in the UK with an estimated one in four people experiencing a 'significant' mental health problem in any one year. With prescriptions at record levels and a huge demand for other therapies, the NHS is examining and commissioning different options, one of which is social prescribing.<sup>1</sup>

Social prescribing enables GPs to refer patients with medical, social, emotional or practical needs to a

range of local, non-clinical services such as exercise programmes, social clubs and nature-based activities – in the same way they would prescribe a drug, or refer a patient to a hospital.

The Eden Project in Cornwall has been running several 'social prescribing' projects, and the early signs are that the 'prescriptions' are working, with a pilot study having shown that over 12 weeks 94% of participants experienced an increase in wellbeing, and the GP surgery saw a 40% drop in

associated visits.<sup>2</sup>

The NHS long-term plan says that  
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The **core values** of the Quiet Garden Movement:

**Hospitality** - the offer of a warm-hearted, simple welcome to all.

**Contemplation** - the practice of silence, stillness, meditation and prayer.

**Nature Connection** - the opportunity to deepen our relationship with the natural world.

**Creativity** - the provision of quiet outdoor space to inspire.



SARAH GODSON  
**Changing spaces**

My old space consisted of working full time with a team of colleagues, living in a noisy, vibrant city, finding enjoyment in a small, pretty Victorian garden. Little time for contemplation or indeed quiet. I discovered a small wood near my office, next to a busy road. It drew me in one sunny day and the stillness, bird song and gentle sound of leaves on branches enabled me to find that Quiet Space during my working week. I often took colleagues to this space; it pleases me that they still use the wood to just be.

My new space is quieter, and I am still in the process of settling into a new home in Herefordshire, and a new role as *Charity Administrator and Supporter Relations* with the Quiet Garden Movement. I am looking forward to enjoying my new garden, where the land itself seems to offer us the possibility of renewal and calm.

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referrals to social prescribing schemes will increase, and the range of support available will be broadened. It also recognises that voluntary and community organisations will have a significant role to play and can add great value to helping NHS resources go further.<sup>3</sup>

We might want to think about:

- How we can prescribe ourselves a regular dose of nature connection?
- What does this mean for my local community?
- How might our Quiet Garden and projects help in this work?

Share your thoughts and find more info and footnotes at: [www.quietgarden.org/np19](http://www.quietgarden.org/np19)

## Love whispers Quietly

**PHILIP RODERICK, Founder and a Patron of the Quiet Garden Movement, reviews *In the Stillness: poems, prayers, reflections* by Elizabeth Mills.**

*In the Stillness* offers the reader a simple yet profound celebration of silence and soulfulness. These meditations provide nudges and invitations, hints and catalysts. They are companions on the interior journey. Each page has a theme and a hidden dynamic, pointing to a daily engagement with the mystery of life in Christ:

In the stillness  
Is the Pearl of Great Price  
Where the Light shines...  
It is within us all  
But we must dig deep

There are different sections in the book, which help to give shape and focus to the reflections. A number of poems begin with a question: "What if.....?" Some of these may well get the grey cells working and bring to the surface thought-provoking musings. More recent prayer/poems feature in one section of the book, together with a simple two line

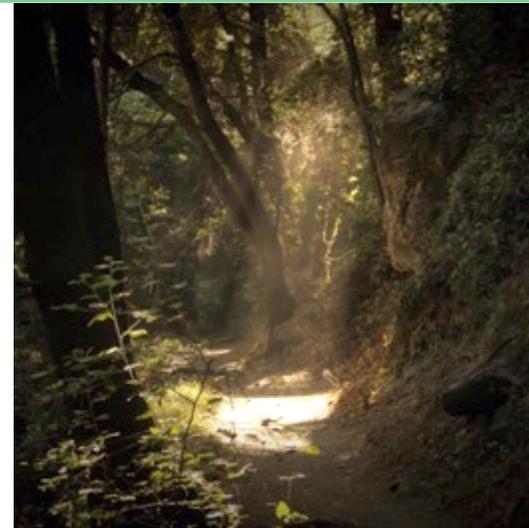


Photo: Iva Rajovic / Unsplash.org

refrain. And so:

Dip into the River of Silence  
Be cleansed, refreshed,  
renewed  
This day and every day  
Amen

Elizabeth Mills, the author, is a Quaker and an educator, with whom I have been in contact over a number of years as a prayer friend. She specialises in early childhood education and works with children having special educational needs. She is married with two children and has been a carer for many years. "In the Stillness" can be purchased for £10 from Amazon, the Quaker Bookshop ([www.bookshop.quaker.org.uk](http://www.bookshop.quaker.org.uk)) or from the publisher, Inner Light Books ([www.innerlightbooks.com](http://www.innerlightbooks.com)).

TINA JEFFERIES - Host of Sanctum Quiet Garden, Herefordshire, UK

# LEAVE HERE A GARDEN...

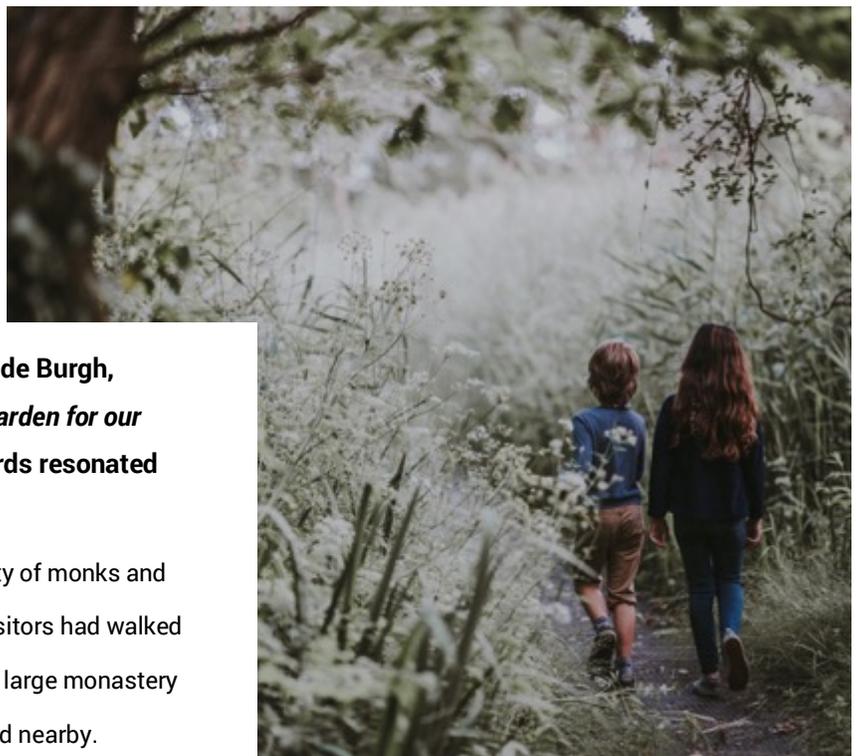


Photo: Annie Spratt / Unsplash.org

A favourite song of mine, 'Shine On', by Chris de Burgh, contains the phrase... *"We must leave here a garden for our children, when we are gone forever."* These words resonated particularly at a recent time of change.

During early February, my husband and I moved house. Saying goodbye to the garden we'd developed and nurtured for over 17 years (7 ½ as Quiet Garden Hosts). We left it with thanksgiving for all that had been and will be to the coming new family.

Having a few weeks gap between leaving and move-in to the new home, we spent time in something of 'no-man's-land', pacing time. No usual weeding, pruning, mowing, hosting and hospitality, we paused.

Enjoying being hosted by our son and his family, we explored a different locality and discovered that many centuries before us, on the very ground we were daily walking the dog,

a community of monks and transient visitors had walked before us, a large monastery having stood nearby.

As sojourners in this beautiful Herefordshire landscape, where snowdrops peeped from under hedgerows and sentinel oaks bordered meandering streams, we absorbed the oozing tranquillity. We reflected, on transitions, of time, place, and people; reminding ourselves that a garden is there in the heart, as well as in physical places. That to 'leave here a garden for our children' is not just leaving a walled or fenced, sometimes contrived, space, but offer ourselves, as the gifts of a garden, throughout changing times and place.

## Pause... a new look

### *We hope you like the new name and design...*

We've worked hard to re-design the newsletter for the Quiet Garden Movement over recent months. 'Pause' replaces 'Quiet Places', which you may know has been our newsletter for many years. The new look brings more space and colour and will allow us to share stories, quotes and inspiration with a wider Movement.

If you have any feedback, suggestions or stories to share please do send them to us – contact details on the back.

*"If I suspend judgement... maybe I will see something new. Maybe I will be able to allow something entirely beyond my current experience and imagination to break into my world – and change me, expand my thinking, open up whole new avenues of experience. If awareness opens up the space, non-judgement keeps it open long enough for me to be able to see – truly see – the freshness and newness of what is actually here."*

Tim Stead reflecting on the key contributions mindfulness makes to the spiritual endeavour: the priority of awareness and of *non-judgement*, from See, Love, Be: Mindfulness and the spiritual life (2018, SPCK).

Listen to Tim speak at our 2019 Annual Gathering – visit [www.quietgarden.org/ag-2019](http://www.quietgarden.org/ag-2019)



## Found space at half-term

In February half-term Cathy Davie, host of Mossrigg Quiet Garden in W. Yorkshire, opened her garden to run 'Found space'.

The idea was to provide a mix of active and quiet, indoor and outdoor activities exploring, reflecting and responding to creation. A journey of discovery for all ages and stages of life and belief.

Cathy planned a structured programme including time to talk, time to be silent, time to be and time to do. Most people that came had never attended similar events and the feedback was great:

*"It has been wonderful to slow down and take a moment to contemplate nature and God... My daughters aged 5 and 7 are learning about being more 'mindful' at school and the quiet garden builds on this and allows them to practice,"* said Aurelie.

Whilst Amber, aged 11, reflected that it, *"was a really nice idea... I liked how everyone worked together and enjoyed themselves. I liked how you could walk/sit around and think about your feelings."*

Cathy found providing something for all ages worked really well, with parents also getting something for themselves and providing an introduction to the idea of taking 'a quiet day'. Everyone was responsive to the challenge of keeping silent for a short time, and it was great to share some thoughts and findings in the group time to encourage and inspire one another.

For more details and the activities visit: [www.quietgarden.org/FS2019](http://www.quietgarden.org/FS2019)

### Join us at an event...

In **September (23-27)** we will be running our **Quiet25 Retreat** again, this time at **Scargill House in N Yorkshire, UK**. It will be a time for retreat and to explore silence together, as well as find out more about the Quiet Garden Movement. It is open to anyone. To book and to find out more about this national event, plus lots of local events being run in Quiet Gardens in your area, visit: [www.quietgarden.org/events](http://www.quietgarden.org/events)

*"Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest"* Mark 6:31

### New Quiet Gardens

Welcome to the following new Quiet Gardens opened in the last 6 months...

#### Australia

Buderim Centre of Spirituality and Ecology, Queensland

#### Canada

St Andrew & St Paul Montreal, Quebec

#### Hong Kong

Canaan Garden

#### New Zealand

Bazdel

#### UK

Acomb Methodist, N Yorkshire

Cefnfaes Cottage, Powys

Headstone Manor and Museum

Reflection Garden, Harrow, London

Quiet Waters, Suffolk

Spiceland Meeting House, Devon

Ulverston Churchyard, Cumbria

For a full list of Quiet Gardens visit:

[www.quietgarden.org/find-gardens](http://www.quietgarden.org/find-gardens)

## Quiet Garden Movement sharing outdoor space for wellbeing and the inner journey

We nurture access to outdoor space for prayer, reflection and rest in a variety of settings, such as private homes, churches, schools and hospitals. Each space opens differently but is made available for everyone, wherever they find themselves. There are hundreds of locations around the world. Please support us to enable us to expand this work: [www.quietgarden.org/dontate](http://www.quietgarden.org/dontate)

The Quiet Garden Trust is a UK registered charity – No. 1038528

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