

## Tending God's Garden

The 13<sup>th</sup> Century gem of St Nicholas' in Arne feels remote. The village was evacuated during the War and only a small population allowed to return afterwards. Although surrounded by the largest onshore oilfield in Europe, it is in the middle of a nature reserve.



Yet, when Marion Wood started a four year spell as churchwarden in 1995, a report said the churchyard, then managed purely to look neat and tidy, was hostile to wildlife.

So Marion got a team together to turn it into a 'Living Churchyard'. Grass was mown less often to help wildflowers, with seeds bought from ethical suppliers. Thatch and compost were carefully managed. A group of people worked hard over 19 long years.

Now, the Dorset Wildlife Trust has awarded them a prize for the best of over 100 *Living Churchyards* in the county. Rare bats and birds have returned, along with slow-worms

and adders, and a riot of wildflowers from late winter through to the summer.

Marion's husband Patrick is a Roman Catholic, and each tries to support the other's church activities, so he is a key part of the gardening team.

The metaphor of God as a gardener is a powerful one, from Genesis to St John's Resurrection account. It is one that chimes with Marion, "I feel positive and close to God when I'm working here, helping Him care for His world", she says, "The best things in life are free."

"We are given stewardship over creation, not ownership of it."

## Bishop's Letter

The Right Revd Nicholas Holtam  
Bishop of Salisbury

The tiny village of Powerstock is one of many to use the centenary of the start of the First World War to research the names read from their War Memorial on Remembrance Day. Seventeen local people committed to the project and involved others, including the readers of the *Bridport News*.

In the book they published, they tell of people who would otherwise remain unknown names read out on Remembrance Day and provide a window into the world a hundred years ago through the particulars of their village.

War is terrible. The list and scale of conflicts in our present world is dispiriting: the continuing struggles of South Sudan mean there are 1.4 million displaced people and the United Nations estimate 4 million are at risk of hunger; Syria, the incipient Islamic State in Iraq; the Ukraine; Boko Haram in Nigeria.... The Pope has wondered if they will define and shape this century as the First World War did the last.

It can feel overwhelming, as though nothing we could do will make any difference. It is easy to become mean-spirited, selfish and inward looking.

So here are some suggestions about how to renew hope, repair the world and be human so that we remain open to God, and one another.

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Jewish Rabbis teach that the person who makes peace with their neighbour makes peace with the world. That is a good start but don't forget Jesus taught that our neighbour includes the people no-one likes and also our enemy. Love is without limit, so charity which begins at home does not

stop at home.

We live in a world overloaded with information. Our knowledge is rapidly expanding. Wisdom, on the other hand, is precious and hard won.

In all our remembrances, we are seeking understanding, wisdom and the Spirit of God that makes for peace.

## A Handy Village Outreach

A retired vicar has run a church event where people can take household items to be repaired free of charge.

The *Fix & Repair Café* in Shalbourne is the brainchild of Canon Stephen Trapnell, who has 'always been handy'.

"I thought this would build better links between church and village", says Stephen, "and challenge our 'throwaway' mentality.

"A dozen people took 16 items in for repair, donating £80. People stayed for chat and coffee at the cheerful



event.

"After 58 years in ordained ministry, I believe faith must be practical and personal to be relevant and meaningful.

"I also took the opportunity to say there are times when a bit of 'Fix & Repair' might be appropriate in our own lives!"

## Teaching Faith In Flowers

"I started by displaying wild flowers in jam jars at village shows with my Mum as a boy. It just built from there."

Michael Bowyer has been Creative Director for Salisbury Cathedral Flowers for three years. The Calne native took the job after a career in flowers that has seen him win gold medals at the Chelsea Flower Show, and exhibit from Pakistan to Barbados.

"Even after a professional life

in flowers, the Cathedral work is enjoyable and fulfilling", says Michael, "The setting is special. My arrangers come from varied backgrounds - from the Cathedral, from other C of E parishes, from other denominations and some aren't religious.

"Everyone works as a team. Flowers are a great away of encouraging people into Church who normally wouldn't cross the door.

"Flowers offer a welcome to anyone who walks into a church, showing it is loved and cared for. They also help teach the Christian faith. Firstly, through designs of Christian symbols and Bible scenes, but also by being a reminder of God's continuing creation."

Michael has organised some big shows, including Canterbury



# Magna Carta: 800 Not Out!

Salisbury Cathedral hosts one of the four surviving copies of Magna Carta. Written in 1215, it was the first document imposed on an English Monarch by his subjects. It established the right to due process and gave birth to constitutional government.

How relevant is it today? Its clauses are still referred to in courts across the world, especially by those fearing an unfair trial. Hip-hop superstar Jay-Z named his most recent album in honour of Magna Carta.

Next year is Magna Carta's 800th anniversary. Parishes are asked to think of how they can join in with local and national celebrations. A pilgrimage and major flower festival are planned. More details are available at [www.salisbury.anglican.org/magnacarta](http://www.salisbury.anglican.org/magnacarta).

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Cathedral's 1400<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. His next big task is to co-design next September's *Magna Flora* festival at our Cathedral, celebrating Magna Carta's 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

"One theme will be to depict quotes from the document in flowers - things like *'the English Church shall be free'* and *'to no one will we deny justice'*."

"For the piece on *'standard measures of wine, ale and corn'*, we'll be making large displays of barrels and sheaves in flowers, for example.

"It will be great fun and more than 450 people have already volunteered. There are still a few weeks to sign up and absolute beginners are most welcome."