

THE GARDEN

Supplement to The Magazine of The Parish of St Mary The Boltons

rooted in faith • open in thought • reaching out in service

Patronal Festival 2019



A country garden once again in the heart of Kensington and Chelsea

At the very heart of The Boltons in south west London lies a small publicly accessible garden surrounding the Church of St Mary The Boltons, sometimes called the country church in Chelsea. The garden has been maintained by parishioners as a much appreciated local open space, but the havoc caused by its use for storage and construction purposes while mobile telephone masts were installed in the church tower was beyond the resources of volunteers to restore.

In 2017 The Revd Jenny Welsh, Vicar of St Mary The Boltons invited garden designer Non Morris to redesign the south and west-facing space surrounding the church. The brief was to create a coherent, attractive and uplifting garden looking as

good as possible throughout the year, to include biblical plants where possible and to provide cut flowers and foliage for the church. The reconstruction work was undertaken by HG Landscapes Ltd, and the refreshed and replanted gardens opened in time for Easter 2019. They are now maintained by Forbes and Allen Horticulture.

Notable features of the restoration work include the introduction, at the west entrance to the garden, of a multi-stem winter flowering cherry to balance the existing spreading magnolia on the other side of the church door; the re-emergence at the heart of the garden of a rockery, with its rounded shape echoed in the gently curving beds created further into the garden; and beyond that the arch of a wisteria framing the south door of the church. Dwarf alpine plants and other bulbs in

the rockery will offer a jewel-like succession of colour as the seasons progress. Around the main south lawn four multi-stemmed medlar trees will provide beautiful white flowers in May and glowing bronze fruits and richly coloured leaves in autumn. The borders have been planted with shrubs, including bay, cistus and myrtle for their biblical connection, to offer a succession of colour and interest, while the perennial layer that knits everything together includes some brilliant performers such as the wallflower *Erysimum* Bowles Mauve and *Bergenia cordifolia* Autumn Magic.

Paths have been re-laid and extended, recycling the existing York Stone and unified with a warm sand-coloured pea gravel. Six rounded 'Camelback' benches are reproductions of a Victorian design, made of cast iron and the hard wood Iroko. They sit comfortably among the new planting and against the backdrop of the mid-nineteenth century church.

The garden is the only publicly accessible garden in an area full of mature private gardens. It is used by many different people every day of the year. It is registered with the Quiet Garden Movement and forms part of the whole garden area of The Boltons, listed by Historic England.

The Revd Jenny Welsh said 'this project has achieved far more than the work we were initially considering. This is a significant milestone in the life of the parish and we are extremely grateful to our friends and neighbours and other donors whose generous donations have made the project possible'.

Non Morris



**The Garden was renovated in 2019
with the generous support of
Alan and Dee McIntosh
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and local anonymous donors.**



Illustration by Malou Bonicos

The Vicar's Welcome

The garden here at St Mary's has always been a place of quiet and rest for many people who come to worship or visit the church and for many more passers-by who simply want to sit in a green space, to read, reflect, eat their lunch. A couple of years of work in the tower had left the garden in a poor state, but in 2019, we have been able to restore its beauty with new beds and lawn, and some truly lovely flowering plants and trees. Non Morris' design has been made into a reality by an excellent team of landscaper gardeners, and it has all been made possible by generous gifts from several local friends and neighbours who caught the vision of what we wanted to do and we are very grateful to them all. I personally want to pay tribute to the members of the congregation who have supported the project, in particular Edwina Sassoon and Leo Fraser

Mackenzie whose encouragement has been unswerving.

The gardens around our church are one of two public green spaces in the parish, though we are surrounded by private garden squares that are often hidden behind trees and hedges. Our gardens are thus a precious gift for people who otherwise have no access to a garden locally. Our church grounds are open every day of the year throughout the day and you can usually see someone sitting on a bench, or on the grass, enjoying the quiet and beauty they find there. The garden is a welcoming spot for children and their carers, people walking up from the busyness of the Fulham Road, or taking a break from visiting someone in the hospital, workmen on the several construction sites in The Boltons, street sweepers, postmen, couriers.

We were thrilled, shortly after the garden reopened, to see our first passing cyclist reclining with his sandwiches on one of the new benches, his bike perched against the iron railings.

We were honoured this summer to win a prize in the Brighter Kensington and Chelsea garden competition (Category 6: nursing homes, hospitals and places of worship) and were given a special mention as a first time entrant. We have our stalwart gardener, Louisa Allen, to thank for her hard work in continuing to maintain the garden to a high standard, alongside the volunteers who clear leaves and litter, and Dave Ireton who mows and waters.

We hope that you will enjoy the garden too, and get to know it through the year, as things blossom and grow, as they die back in winter and begin to sprout again in the spring.

Jenny Welsh

Non Morris, Garden Designer and Writer

Non is a garden designer with a reputation for delivering imaginative and uplifting gardens. She offers a bespoke personal, service and delivers enduring and atmospheric gardens that look good throughout the year. Recent public commissions include the South London Gallery and North Kensington Library and she has designed numerous private gardens in London, Suffolk, Oxfordshire and Sussex.

Non writes about gardens for *Country Life*, *House and Garden* and *Gardens Illustrated* and has a monthly *Spectator Life* column, *The Art of The Garden*, which links a work of art to an aspect of gardening. She has written and edited a memoir, *Mollie; Portrait of a Gardener*, about the 6th Marchioness of Salisbury who made gardens at Cranborne Manor, Hatfield and Highgrove. This will be published later this summer by the Garden Museum.
www.fraserandmorris.com



Biblical Plants in the Garden

Laurus nobilis 'Angustifolia': bay tree. There are five bay trees behind the rockery.
I Corinthians 9.25 (indirectly).

Helianthemum 'The Bride': Rock Rose. This low growing silver leaved white flowered rock rose is at the centre of the rockery.

Cistus corbariensi: Cistus also known as rock rose. There are three groups of cistus in the main border around the lawn. Genesis 37.25; 43.11 (indirectly).

Anemone x hybrida 'Honorine Jobert': anemone or windflower, tall white late summer flowering, dotted around the borders. Matthew 6.28.

Cyclamen hederifolium: autumn flowering cyclamen in the rockery. Luke 12.27.

Crocus/Saffron was present in the Garden of Solomon. Bulbs in the rockery and under the winter flowering cherry and magnolia trees in front of the west Door. Isaiah 35:1; Song of Solomon 2.1; 4.14.

Myrtis communis: Myrtle. There are two small myrtle shrubs in the main border, which will become much more substantial in the years to come. Isaiah, 55.13; Zechariah 1.8.

Narcissus: There will be daffodil bulbs under the magnolia and winter flowering cherry trees, in the rockery and in the main borders. Matthew 6.30 (indirectly).

Phillyrea latifolia Olea europea: Two clipped Green Olive trees stand at either corner of the main border and were chosen as they are part of the olive family. Genesis 8.11.

Pulsatilla vulgaris Pasque Flower : in the rockery, associated with Easter (see p. xx in *Clarion*).

Helleborus orientalis, known as the Lenten Rose. Used as ground cover throughout the borders. Tulips in the rockery and borders are not singled out in the Bible, but are thought to be part of Lilies of the Field. Matthew 6.28-9.
Non Morris



Photo: Dave Ireton



Brighter Kensington and Chelsea Winner 2019

Category 6. Nursing Homes Hospitals Places of Worship

1. St Mary the Boltons

Special Awards

First time Entry St Mary the Boltons



Local Illustrator

Malou Bonicos is a local illustrator and creator of intellectual property for children's television programmes. She has been drawing since she was three years old. She attended Bousfield Primary School and completed her Foundation and BA Honours Degree courses in Illustration and Graphic Design at Chelsea School of Art.
www.maloubonicos.com