



GARDENER: Angie MacDonald
LOCATION: Hayle, Cornwall
NOMINATED BY: Keith Butterfield

My wife lost her first husband suddenly in a driving accident. Widowed at the age of 30, her son just two years old, her instinct was to go away for a break. Through talking to other people who were bereaved, Angie found that many of them also found it difficult to think about a break, the prospect of being surrounded by happy holidaymakers was hard to face.

Angie found being by the sea, going for long walks, and walking around gardens really helped. The formative idea of creating a venue with a special garden for bereaved families began to take shape. A garden was to be created not just to offer time out in a peaceful place, but to raise awareness of the natural course of grief. The lasting impact of grief is something people have to live with and work through - but this need is often ignored by society.

Remarried - we found three cottages with a secluded south-facing garden, looking across the sea to St Michael's Mount. Angie registered her idea with the Charity Commission - to provide a special location needed by those suffering loss and grief, a unique place to help establish a new normal.

Angie began to tackle her garden. It had originally been a walled garden which was split, and the planting



was quite basic. Over time and on a limited budget Angie has built it into a special place, and conveyed the joy which a garden can bring, The aim was to create a perennial flower garden of herbs and scented plants with an English cottage garden feel, unusual in Cornwall, where people like to grow exotics. Angie has a love of flowers, particularly herbaceous perennials, and experiments with different colours. There are tree ferns, some very old apple trees, also some new fruit trees, vines, a walnut and mulberry. The garden has secret places where children can play hide and seek.

There are sunny patios, secluded lawns, a play sculpture, quiet seating, hidden corners, different levels and a Victorian Folly where those staying at the cottages can gaze out to sea, or write poems or stories about the person they have lost.

Sand Rose does not offer a therapeutic or counselling programme - we simply give families the key to a cottage where they will be staying and the garden works its magic, they know they are in a place where their bereavement is acknowledged - the garden is key to helping people recover.

As a direct result of Angie's personal loss and insight she has offered a helping hand to hundreds of families, who are referred by bereavement services, GP's, hospitals and other organisations. When you read the entries in the Visitors' Book, you can see the difference her garden has made to the people who stay here.

For further information www.sandrose.org.uk e-mail keithbutterfield@sandrose.org.uk Tel: 01736 752791

We are keen to attract a patron to the charity

Please credit the photos to Charles Francis, text to Liz Norbury and Keith Butterfield