

A thank you to the universe for the immeasurable joys and rewards I have received in the gardens at Unstone Grange.

I've been able to fulfil a lifetime's ambition of restoring a vintage kitchen garden to a state of vibrancy. The luxury of observing and being part of the process of breathing life back into a moribund site.

It's been great to feed people and establish an alternative food culture, separate and protected from supermarkets and food technologists.

I'm so proud to have been a Soil Association certified grower for the past 5 years. I never thought I would be.

It's been great to be able to establish a reputation for organics and develop into a credible educational establishment. I fulfilled my personal ambition of delivering an accredited course which I had written and developed independently, based on my 15 years of organic experience.

I've met thousands of visitors who have been complimentary and supportive. Knowing that there are so many people who have come into contact with an organic environment and taken away happy memories.

It was wonderful to be able to nurture and harness so much goodwill and generosity of spirit.

I've been able to work with an incredible range and diversity of people – volunteers, clients, learners, researchers, speakers, workers on allied projects and a huge network of well-wishers. I was able to generate a lot of energy and enthusiasm knowing that there were so many passive supporters of the gardens.

I was amazed and gratified when students were so motivated, enthused and actually got educated. They also reported that they developed many valuable ongoing social contacts and friendships.

I've fulfilled so many ambitions and developed so many skills, some of which I didn't know I had before the need or

opportunity came along. Collaborating to put together a website which has had 5,500 “hits” – it was always great to know that so many people were sharing some of the pleasures of the garden, if only virtually.

I would be embarrassed to admit to the amount of pure pleasure I’ve experienced over the last ten years, if it weren’t for the fact that I got even more pleasure by being able to bring pleasure into others’ lives. I could talk about the joys I experienced on a weekly basis, but the vicarious pleasure of seeing other people’s joy and happiness was even more joyful to me.

I’ve been happy to take on extra burdens and responsibilities, such as being Health and Safety officer, if that means that others can then benefit from the facilities.

Serious function of being in a position to genuinely and radically mend and heal many people’s damaged and disrupted lives. I found deep gratification in providing security, stability and support to vulnerable people.

Being able to form a deep connection with every inch of the gardens. It’s been a privilege both as volunteer and worker to be able to enjoy the surroundings.

I think there is now a tradition of positive activity in the gardens. I consider this my legacy – that the gardens are a fully functioning organic organism with its own life and vigour.

It was great for me to be able to embody the spirit of the gardens and their tradition. For many people, we created a haven from the vagaries, follies and pitfalls of the modern mainstream world.

I’ve been told so many times that the gardens and gardening activities are the heart of Unstone Grange and an embodiment of the co-operative ethic which people expect.

For all this and more I have to thank you from the bottom of my heart and the depths of my soul.