

# THE GARDENS



**The ten acre gardens of the International Bomber Command Centre form a symbolic and beautiful setting to both the Chadwick Centre and Memorial Spire comprising of the principle elements; the International Peace Garden and the Lincolnshire Peace Garden. The gardens provide peaceful, contemplative spaces which both frame and exploit spectacular views northwards towards Lincoln Cathedral. Nestled between the city's South Common and the expansive farmland beyond, the gardens have been designed to reflect on a typical Bomber Command Crew's journey symbolised by a simple narrative of; approach, assemble, interpret and prepare, fly, reflect, return and remember.**

Progression through the gardens and each stage of the symbolised journey leads the visitor onwards towards the Spire. The journey begins upon 'approach' through the beech square, which channels visitors towards the Chadwick Centre and emerging Spire beyond. From this point, visitors walk to a high sided quadrangle, where they will 'assemble' in front of a map which will chart their onward destination. The room has been designed to impart a sense of suspense and anticipation resonant of the anxiety of a crew gathering to hear the details of their night's raid.

From here the visitor proceeds towards a metaphorical plane represented by the Chadwick Centre. The building houses a state of the art exhibition/display which provides opportunities to 'interpret' and 'prepare' before the final stage of the journey. Upon exit from the building the visitor then experiences a sense of 'flight' as eyes are drawn upwards towards the Spire.

Now standing within the Lincolnshire Peace Garden, the visitor moves past 27 native lime trees, representing the 27 stations from which Lincolnshire bomber command crews flew. The trees are arranged to form a map of the county and are surrounded by wild grass lawns, intentionally left long so as to merge seamlessly with the adjacent South Common. 8,000 daffodil bulbs, have been introduced into the garden and 'Carpets' of wildflowers, which include red poppies, have been created between the 'Walls of Names' that circle the Spire.

The Spire is surrounded by a maze of seating and hedges which provide enclosure and opportunities for

quiet contemplation. Here the visitor is allowed time and space to 'reflect' on the almost 58,000 names cut into the surrounding steel walls. Behind each name is a life lived and ultimately lost in service to Bomber Command.

From this point the visitor is directed to the 'return' stage of the journey. Moving onwards toward the International Peace Garden, the Lincoln Cliff edge guides you first to a symbolic 'coastline' of planting. Here, a series of planting beds arranged as 'waves', has been designed to represent the five continents and 62 nations that supported Bomber Command. Lincolnshire stone and gravel used both within and between the beds has been chosen to specifically reference the east coast of Lincolnshire – a coastline over which so many flew.

Plant species have been chosen and arranged according to which continent they either originate from, and/or are associated with, reflecting indigenous floral communities and cultural associations. In this respect typical representative species used include: *Crocosmia Lucifer* (Africa), *Acer saccharum* - Sugar Maple (Americas), *Acer palmatum* - Japanese Maple (Asia), *Eucalyptus gunnii* - Gum Tree (Australasia), and *Laurus nobilis* - Bay Tree (Europe).

Upon departure from The International Peace Garden, a sculpture created by Jason Pettrica, will provide a focal point at which the visitor may finally reflect and 'remember'. The sculpture has been designed to symbolise both navigation and the skies to whom so many were lost, their memories now etched in the oral histories that are kept and exhibited in the Chadwick Centre.