

Behind the scenes

some background information
especially for anyone who stitches!

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Would you like to keep up to date on the latest news on Threads through Creation – and more?

If you downloaded this file via the website, or got it from a friend, we won't have your email address. If you would like to be on our mailing list for very occasional updates and news, simply send an email to threads2023@aol.com with 'mailing list' in the subject line. You can of course opt out at any time.



Twelve huge panels, three years' work, miles of thread, eight million stitches !

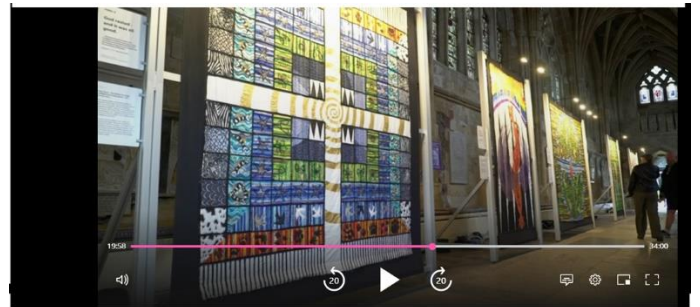
Threads through Creation consists of twelve huge textile panels retelling the Genesis story in the first pages of the bible. It represents three years' work. It took about eight million stitches, miles of thread and an awful lot of silks (as much as would cover two badminton courts)!



miles of thread ...



Jacqui sometimes does preparatory pieces ('samplers') experimenting with different colours and stitching.



Jacqui was on BBC TV 'Songs of Praise' in August. The programme went to Exeter Cathedral and her studio. Here she is with her trusty sewing machine which has clocked up more than 24 million stitches!

Behind the scenes, from start to finish:



Bedsheets!

Each panel starts with an old bedsheet, usually French linen. Jacqui likes the rougher textured ones, the slubby ones, the ones that are patched and darned.

Why old bedsheets?

She likes the idea of taking the ordinary and making it special and spectacular. She likes the thought that these sheets have seen all kinds of human emotions, and that the sorrows and joys are part of her work.

The practical side is that these sheets provide a perfect base or canvas for what will come next.

Quilting

Each sheet is quilted and sometimes a grid is drawn on top. This helps with developing the design and stitching the different elements on top.

Design

Jacqui draws up and develops a design many times on A3 and A2 sheets of paper. When she's happy with a design, it's enlarged using a computer, and a full size version is made in paper, creating a huge sheet about 2.5m high made up of up to 42 sheets of A3 paper.



Creatures

For the many creatures on the panels, Jacqui sketches from photos, and aims to characterise them rather than provide an accurate depiction. Some of the creatures are imaginatively made up, and some are very specific. On panel 7, for example you'll see a dog, a whippet, in honour of Twiggy who was a well known local dog.



Painting

Jacqui uses fabric dyes to paint the sheet. At this stage she has a fairly accurate idea of the layout and design, although even at this stage things can change. Much of the painted background will eventually be obscured, but you will get glimpses of it between the silk layers and it adds to the more

flat colour of the silks. With some it is more obvious, for example on panel 4.



painting for panel 12



painting for panel 4



Silks

For the rest of the work, Jacqui only uses fine silks, including dupions and organzas. This is because she loves the way silk frays. She admires people who work with precision on quilts, but she prefers a slightly rough finish. She also doesn't mind that many of the panels aren't perfect rectangles.

Colours

Although she has more than 100 different colours of silk in her studio, she restricts the range of colours on every panel. If you look across several panels you may pick up on a few colours that are used as a running theme.

Layering

Now for the most exciting bit! Jacqui places and stitches layers of silks. She cuts back to reveal lower layers and the bedsheet.

While trimming back the main designs the studio becomes littered with little pieces. And Jacqui saves as much as she can just in case they're useful later!



Design development

One of the challenges of working on a very large scale is that you often need to make changes from your smaller drawings. Jacqui often spends a lot of time planning elements using pieces of paper over a panel, sometimes re-drawing and re-positioning several times.



Appliqué

Once the background is complete, there may be various forms of appliqué. Jacqui often uses thick black thread, and some of the creatures are given little black boxes to sit in – this gives the colours a glow, like a stained glass window.

Layers of colour

Jacqui often draws on tissue paper, pins down the paper over layers of fabric, then stitches through paper and layers. Then she removes the paper – often a very fiddly process! – and cuts away some upper layers of silk to reveal lower ones.

The following photos give an idea of the process. They are from a kit she has prepared for stitching the crab (who appears on panel 6). It is available on the online shop.



strips and pieces ready ...



layers pinned down ...



stitching done, starting to remove the tissue paper



finished item: tissue paper removed, layers of silk cut back

Direct on the large sheet

A key difference is that Jacqui usually does this work directly on the large sheets, not on smaller pieces that then would be sewn onto a large sheet. She also does 'samplers' – trial pieces, trying out different colour combinations and shapes, refining details. Some of these samplers are available for sale.

Textures

Especially noticeable on panel 7, 8 and 12, Jacqui creates extraordinary textures with the layering of silks and stitching.



Leathers

Jacqui sometimes uses metallic leathers – thin leather which has aluminium and other metal leaf pressed on it. They are lovely and shiny. The disadvantage is that they sit differently on the panel, not really integrating into a design, so she uses them carefully. They're also quite tricky to stitch, but fortunately Jacqui has an assistant, Eni, who does it brilliantly and has endless patience! Thanks to podcasts, she completed the 200 or so silver fish on panel 6 (above) over about two weeks, quite happily ...

There are about 200 birds flying on panel 6, and nearly 300 stars made of silvered leather on panel 5.



Gold

Jacqui has used gold leaf on several panels. Sometimes she fixes the gold on a piece of silk, then cuts the silk into a shape, such as a spiral. Sometimes the gold goes straight onto the fabric in position, for example the large spirals on panels 1 and 8 (above). You may also spot some dots of silver (aluminium leaf) on panel 3.

Instead of a solid even finish, such as one panel 8, it can be very effective to use the gold leaf to give a kind of distressed, patchy finish, which you can spot on some panels such as numbers 2 and 10 (below).





A bit of fun

Jacqui likes to slip in something every now just for fun! Following on from a medieval tradition, she sometimes creates a frame in black silk strips and then has something break out of the boundary, such as the macaw that can't possibly stay in his frame- the flying fish (above) escaping into the ocean - and the shoal of fish jumping out of the panel 6. It's particularly good to have things for children to spot. And most people enjoy finding the camouflaged chameleon...

Handling the panels

People often ask how Jacqui works with such large sheets. They wonder if she works on smaller pieces and stitches these on. In fact, she works on a whole sheet. The secret is simple – tables! Up to three long ones hold the weight of the fabric.



Money!

People often wonder how all this is financed.

Jacqui Parkinson's cathedrals exhibitions are a leap of faith. Creating and touring is very costly. She receives no public funding. When she starts a new project, it is not fully funded; she simply trusts that sufficient money will come in to pay for making it and touring it.

Would you like to help? Her work delights and touches hundreds of thousands of people. **Threads through Revelation** toured 14 cathedrals 2016-2018, and was seen by more than half a million visitors. It is believed to be largest textile art project by a single artist, ever.

Threads through Creation is touring twenty cathedrals from 2021 to 2024. The cathedrals kindly provide the location, and sometimes contribute towards costs.

New Creations is a charity (registered Charity, no 1045719) that manages donations and provides support to these projects: there's a team of friends who give financial and prayerful support.

However large or small a donation, each supporter is an important part of the picture. If you feel moved to contribute, new friends are always welcome!

If you'd like to help, please visit www.creation-threads.co.uk for details and links how to donate.

Big plans!

Jacqui has now started '**Threads through the Cross**', planning to complete it in 2024.

This will be the largest of the three sets, with scenes from Jesus' life shown in eighteen panels.

We're planning to put together all three sets to create '**Threads through the Bible**' which will be able to tour in some very large cathedrals from 2025-2026.

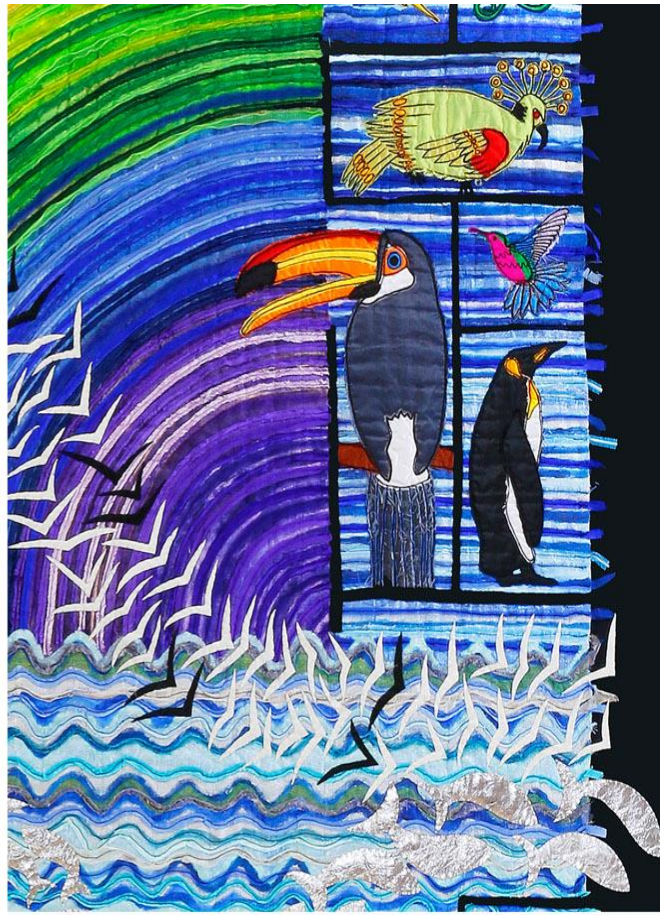
The premiere opening is scheduled for Liverpool Cathedral in January 2025.

In all there will be 42 panels, with more than 25 million stitches (as astonishing performance from Jacqui's Sweet Sixteen). If the panels were put together side by side they would stretch nearly 100m.

We think that it's going to be the largest textile art project for 600 years! (If you know of any other contenders, do tell us ...)

Funding: the costs of touring this are going to be very considerable. If you have any suggestions for possible sources of funding, do let us know! Contact Andrew Parkinson andrewparkinson.456@gmail.com 01626 854572. Thank you!





www.creation-threads.co.uk

 [threadsthroughcreation](https://www.instagram.com/threadsthroughcreation)



Glimpses at **Salisbury Cathedral**

some of the twelve panels positioned around the building



On arrival, visitors are greeted with a huge panel entitled 'In the beginning, God'. Eleven further panels are spread around the building, sometimes singly, sometimes in pairs, and one set of three.



There are information cards next to each panel, giving a quick summary. Many people send photos of the panels around the world. Visitors often photograph the information cards as well as the panels. Hundreds of visitors at each cathedral also buy the short guide to the exhibition.



Several of the panels carry a huge amount of detail, providing interest for children and adults to spot things.



Each panel tells a story, which can be appreciated at different levels.



The panels sit beautifully in cathedral spaces, gently punctuating them with astonishing splashes of colour, providing a delicate visual counterpoint to the typically muted colours of the building's stonework.





about Jacqui Parkinson

Jacqui was born in Manchester and lived most of her adult life in London. She taught drama and directed an arts centre near Wimbledon before changing direction: she went to an evening class on sewing, but it folded after two sessions! However, that was enough to get her hooked, and after being inspired by more evening classes in stitching, so she took a degree in embroidered textiles.

Her first break was a commission from the Deo Gloria Trust for a small exhibition to tour cathedrals. This led to a series of ten more, which have visited most of the cathedrals of England. These allowed her to experiment with lots of ways of working and extend her repertoire, mainly using hand stitching, beads and ribbons, appliqué work, and photo printed linens.

She moved to Devon in 2007, and her work changed gear, to massive projects. She had big plans, and by an amazing coincidence came across a long arm free motion sewing machine, just by chance at a quilt and sewing fair. It was love at first sight!

This sewing machine (a Sweet Sixteen) has completed more than 25 million stitches. The suppliers have never had a machine that has approached that total. Regularly serviced, it has never gone wrong.

Jacqui's Christian faith underpins her work. She is more interested in the message than in self-promotion. She studies extensively on each subject she works on before putting needle to silk. She likes her work to raise questions, encourage interesting conversations, to set people thinking – and laughing together too.

Her first large exhibition was 'Threads through Revelation', fourteen huge panels. It is believed to be the largest textile art project by a single artist, ever. It took nearly four years to complete.

Jacqui has now followed that up with 'Threads through Creation', which is set to visit 20 cathedrals 2021-2024.

'Revelation' re-imagined the last pages of the bible; 'Creation' re-imagines the first pages of the bible.

She has just started her third and final huge project: **'Threads through the Cross'**, eighteen scenes from Jesus' life. This will probably be completed for Easter 2025, and will be the largest of the three.

The three exhibitions will combine to make **Threads through the Bible**. The hope is to be able to exhibit all three together, if we can find venues large enough, for over 100m of panels!



contact: Andrew Parkinson 01626 854572
andrewparkinson.456@gmail.com

Twelve spectacular panels



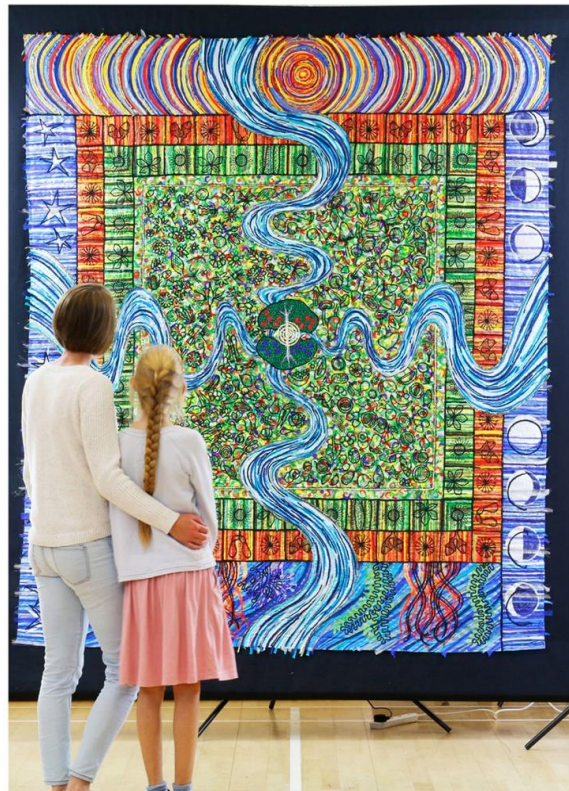
Panel 1
In the beginning



Panel 2
God spoke - light!
Genesis 1: 2-5



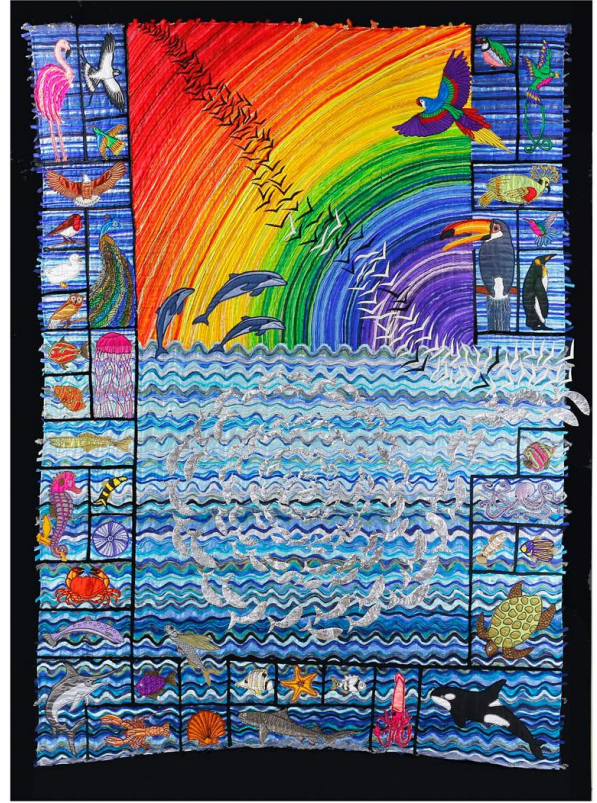
Panel 3
God spoke - water!
Genesis 1: 6-10



Panel 4
God spoke - a green earth!
Genesis 1: 11-13



Panel 5
Universe - sparkle with lights !
 Genesis 1: 14-19



Panel 6
Water and sky - splash with colour!
 Genesis 1: 20-23



Panel 7
Earth - dance with creatures



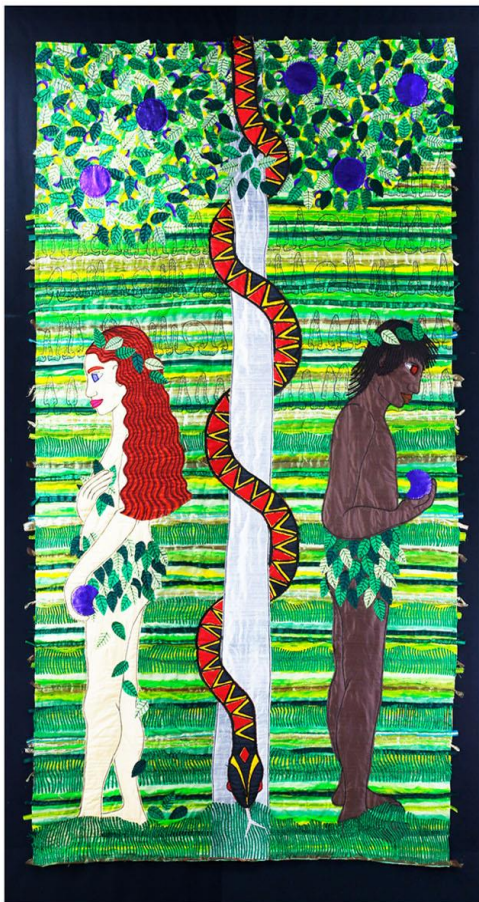
Panel 8
God rested - and it was all good.
 Genesis 2: 1-3



panel 9
Danger - a snake in the garden
 Isaiah 14: 12-15



Panel 10
Two trees - two keepers
 Genesis 2: 8-9

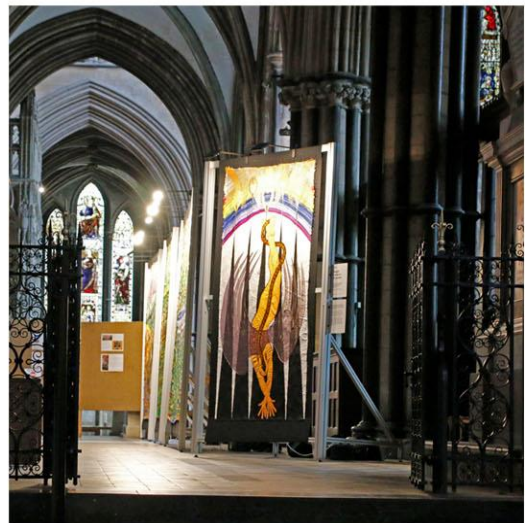
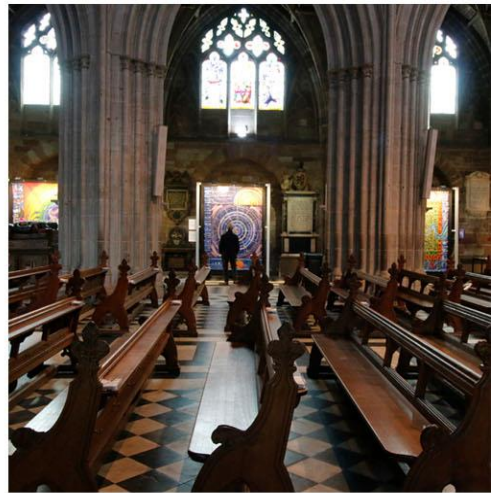


Panel 11
A critical choice
 Genesis 3: 1-7



panel 12
Goodbye to Eden
 Genesis 3: 11-24

**Worcester Cathedral:
day of set up before
opening. On show 27th
April to 5th June**



Threads through Creation - touring cathedrals 2021-2024

precise dates may change: please doublecheck on cathedral websites,
also in case of occasional closures

2023

7th January to 19th March: BATH ABBEY

22nd March to 30th April – PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL

3rd May to 11th June – St ALBANS CATHEDRAL

14th June to 23rd July – ELY CATHEDRAL

26th July to 3rd September – ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL

6th September to 15th October – PORTSMOUTH CATHEDRAL

18th October to 1st December – WELLS CATHEDRAL

touring continues into 2024

please check on cathedral websites for
possible date changes and occasional closures

would you like to help?

Whenever we are setting up and taking down 'Threads through Creation', extra pairs of hands are always useful!

In many places we've enjoyed the company of people from stitching, embroidery and quilting groups (and lots of non-stichers too!) who have provided invaluable help. And they have definitely enjoyed working with Jacqui and our team.

No heavy lifting required, just a lot of unpacking and packing, and being involved in both the interesting parts and the fiddly parts of setting up this astonishing display.

Setting up is always the day before the opening date; taking down is the day after public showing ends.

If any of these cathedrals are local to you, and you'd like to help, do get in touch:

Andrew Parkinson andrewparkinson.456@gmail.com 01626 854572

MERCHANDISE / ARTWORK

Items are available at cathedral shops when the exhibition is there, and online – go to www.creation-threads.co.uk and click on SHOP

All items delivery free (UK only).

Short Guide to Threads through Creation - **£2.00** essential reading while going round the exhibition

'A Very Big Story' - Children's Guide - £8.00 – principally aimed at 6-12 year olds, but many adults love it!

Book: **'Threads through Creation'** - **£20.00** – has a huge amount of detail about the thinking behind and the making - plus hundreds of photos. 240pp

Book: **'Threads through Revelation'** - **£20.00** – again, has a huge amount of detail and hundreds of photos, about Jacqui's previous huge exhibition. 256pp

Postcards – set of 12, details of all the panels - **£6.00**

Fine art prints signed by Jacqui – A4 and A3, all of the panels

Original artwork – individually priced **£120 - £400**

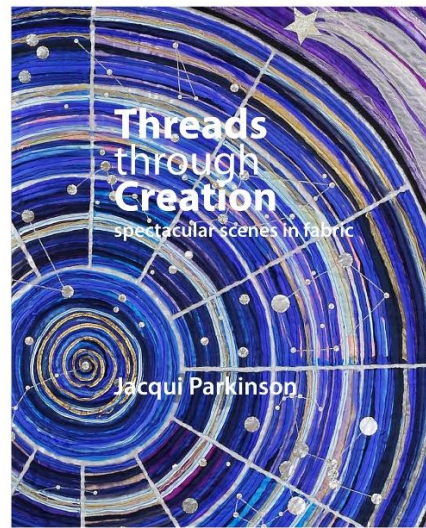
'Good grief?' book **£10.00** – when Jacqui's first husband died, she worked through her grief stitching on vintage handkerchiefs. These and drawings weren't originally intended for public view, but friends persuaded her to turn them into an extremely touching exhibition and book. It can make an excellent gift for someone who has been bereaved.

Good grief cards, five designs **£2.40** each. Photos of very touching stitched handkerchiefs.



Short Guide to the exhibition
- essential reading!
 on sale at the welcome desk
 and cathedral shop. £2.00

The book on the exhibition
 - the making and thinking behind this
 extraordinary project ...



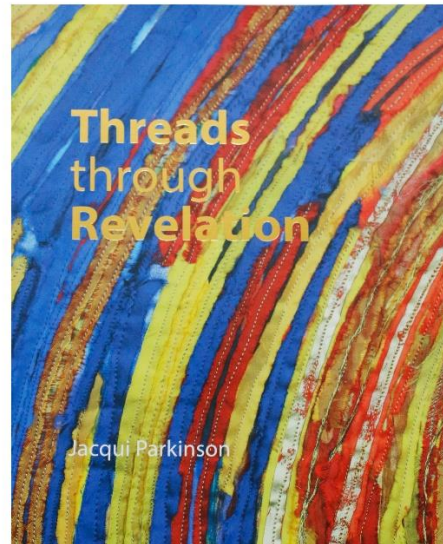
Large format, 240 pages:
hundreds of colour photos
 price £20, from the cathedral shop



Threads through Creation
 Fine art prints, A4
 - signed by the artist
 seven designs
 £12 each, 2 for £20
 available from the
 Cathedral Shop



A detailed book on the thinking and making of
Threads through Revelation
 Jacqui Parkinson's first huge exhibition
 first cathedrals tour 2016-2018



Large format, 240 pages:
hundreds of colour photos
 price £20, from the cathedral shop



Set of 12 postcards
£6.00
from the
cathedral shop

available at the Cathedral Shop :

good grief?

When textile artist Jacqui Parkinson's first husband died, she'd never experienced such pain. To work through her grief, she stitched on a series of vintage handkerchiefs.

Although originally intended as entirely private, friends persuaded her to create a book ...



Book

an extraordinary graphic book by Jacqui Parkinson. Beautiful photos and drawings. An excellent gift to help many people dealing with grief after the initial shock of bereavement.

£10.00

Sympathy greeting cards:

five lovely, touching cards £2.40 each



all twelve designs available from the online shop

www.creation-threads.co.uk