

# A Window to my Soul

Saturday, 17 September 2011

## The Secret Garden in Kent



One late summer's day I visited a place that reminded me of an imaginary world in a book. I visited The Walled Nursery in Hawkhurst Kent.

<http://www.thewallednursery.com/>

I felt as though I had stumbled into 'The Secret Garden' by Frances Hodgson Burnett. I loved this book as a child. As we become older we graduate onto more complex reading texts. But occasionally I like to re-visit some of my childhood favourites to remind myself how comforting reading can be and how you can be transported to other worlds and places. When I left the world of publishing, I asked for a copy of this book as a leaving present. It seemed appropriate, books are rather like gardens and words are like seeds. They both need to be nurtured to grow and flower and sometimes they need to be tamed and pruned.

The entrance is through an outbuilding into an enclosed Victorian kitchen walled garden. In this haven of tranquility I expected to see Ben Weatherstaff the gardener of Misselthwaite Manor, but instead I was greeted by the smiling Emma Davies who along with her husband and young children live and work in this idyll. The Walled Nursery is described on their website as 'a labour of love'.

I was made to feel very welcome and Emma was very happy to chat. It was also possible to wander freely and enjoy the ethereal quality of the garden. Not overly manicured in places it is the perfect place to contemplate nature and nurture.

It contains 13 glasshouses in various degrees of restoration, melon and peach houses. Traditional fruits trained against walls.



Piles of Pots.



A pond with a netting of trellis like a large spiders web, protecting fish and water lilies and children from each other.



I love the way flowers have been allowed to grow and ramble , so much inspiration to take home in thought and image.



Who would not want to sit on this bench and have a quiet moment of contemplation.



*'Our Dickon can make a flower grow out of a brick wall . Mother says he just whispers things out o' th' ground' [ The Secret Garden]*

There is also a small museum with vintage artifacts. A good place for man and boy or indeed for Dickon, whilst Mary Lennon and Colin Craven explore the gravel paths with Colin's wheelchair.

*'Not a human creature was to be caught sight of in the paths they took. In fact every gardener or gardener's lad had been witched away. But they wound in and out among the shrubbery and out and round the fountain beds, following their carefully planned route for the mere mysterious pleasure of it.'*







Then on parting a succulent little gift to take home with the purchase of a memory of a secret special place.



But this is a secret that needs to be shared.

Written by Caroline Auckland of Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Caroline's blog is called 'Window to my soul', Caroline is an author and a member of The Tunbridge Wells Writers, and most importantly, one of our lovely customers! Monty and Emma