

BLOSSOM'S GARDENING SERVICES

Let me introduce myself. I am an elderly but most delightful mongrel called Blossom, who has been living with "the family" for the past two years in Ascott-u-Wychwood, but from February of this year will be residing in Milton-u-Wychwood. My boss, Mark, is the one with the gardening experience, being a professional gardener for more than twenty years. When he left school Mark was living at Whitley Bay, on the coast about ten miles from Newcastle Upon Tyne. He was apprentice gardener with the North Tyneside council working within many aspects of gardening from nurseries, parks and gardens, to tree maintenance and school grounds. Mark's main interest at this time was green-keeping and he also attended Northumberland College of Agriculture and Horticulture for his 'City and Guilds' certificate. He remained for eight years, and met my other 'boss' (i.e., his wife!) and here they married and stayed until 1987.

A move to North Yorkshire and a slight career change for Mark, where he was employed as gardener on a private estate at Newby Hall, near Ripon. The gardens at Newby Hall were fantastic and the owner, a Mr. Compton, is highly respected in horticultural circles. This is where myself, Blossom, joined the family, from the 'Blue Cross' sanctuary at Thirsk being discovered living in a tea-chest with no apparent owners!

After two years at Newby Hall, Mark joined the National Trust, as full time gardener at Fountains Abbey. Here the work varied from grass and hedge cutting to estate work, involving repairing fencing to keep the large herd of deer in the park! In winter there was woodland maintenance, (clearing, to tree planting). One winter, 40,000 trees were planted. We resided in the delightful village of Grewelthorpe, in the Yorkshire Dales and here the family extended to include Bethanie and then later, Jonnie.

In 1994 Mark was promoted to gardener of a property called Nunnington Hall and Rievaulx Terrace and Temples, on the North Yorkshire moors at Helmsley. They were two properties, contrasting in style. Nunnington Hall was a small manor house surrounded by a walled garden with an orchard, rose garden, herbaceous borders and a collection of clematis. Rievaulx was a countryside property, high on the moors with spectacular views over Rievaulx Abbey with a half-mile grass terrace, flanked at each end by temples and surrounded by 90 acres of woodland. Mark had sole control with the help of one part-timer (and his dog!) and many eager volunteers.

It was all change again in 1998, deciding to leave the beautiful North Yorkshire moors and move down to Oxfordshire and the position of head gardener for Mark at a local manor house. Here we settled in really well with the local community and the very friendly folk of Ascott. Mark gained a lot of extra gardening knowledge, while deriving pleasure and satisfaction from working in such an interesting and challenging garden.

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However, he is now redundant and in March he will be starting his own business of maintaining gardens to the high standard he has kept for the past twenty years.

So, thinking of your own garden this year, give him a ring and 'sound him out' about your problems. His home telephone number is: **01993 831169**.

His address, **Mark Nisbet, 28 High Street, Milton-under-Wychwood.**

NB You may see me travelling in my boss's stylish blue van, which hopefully, one day, will have my name emblazoned tastefully on the front!!

JOHN WALKER AND THE DIGITAL ORCHESTRA

Introducing John Walker

'From his very first recordings, John Walker has been his own man and has gone his own way. Ignoring trends, he has developed his own orchestral style and sound. Now, with state of the art equipment and a growing audience, he can truly be considered the Richard Clayderman of the modern electronic organ.' Just one of the many accolades by many respected members of the music business.

With the release of his latest double album 'Your Favourite Melodies' (as advertised on TV), the name John Walker and the Digital Orchestra has been introduced to a completely new audience and through radio broadcasts, concerts and promotional presentations his music is receiving remarkably high acclaim.

Concert performances at over two hundred Organ and Keyboard Societies, both in this country and abroad, together with airplay of his recordings on local and national radio have enhanced his reputation as one of the country's leading keyboard players. He is in great demand for National Organ Festivals and is a regular contributor to various specialist magazines, for which he has written numerous feature articles and product reviews.

John's recordings have been featured numerous times on the BBC Radio 2 programme 'The Organist Entertains' and, at the beginning of 1992, presenter Nigel Ogden invited John to introduce the new Electronic Organ News Spot, which was to be broadcast on the programme monthly. This appointment coincided with a restructuring of the programme and to celebrate the new format, John took part in a live broadcast of the programme from the concert hall of Broadcasting House. However, after seven years with the programme, due to John's ever-increasing workload, he left the show at the end of 1998.

John is now contracted to 'See For Miles Records,' who produce and distribute his recordings throughout the UK and abroad, promoting John Walker and The Digital Orchestra (John's name for his keyboards and equipment), to a much wider audience.