

RESCUE OF A GARDEN

Restoring a Lost Garden in Brundall, Norfolk

Janet Muter

"On a rather overcast spring afternoon in 1984 I drove to Brundall, a riverside village east of Norwich. As I arrived I noticed a road sign which read 'Lake View Drive'. Idly wondering what lake it might be; I turned into the road and was confronted by two large houses under construction. As there was no sign of activity I investigated further and saw, falling away from the buildings, a steep valley, and sheltering under a great forest of trees, three ponds leading down to the shores of a lake. The land was totally overgrown, but I saw a garden just waiting to be reclaimed!"

Thus the author describes her first encounter with her 'lost garden', a small Norfolk Eden left abandoned and just waiting for a loving green-fingered hand to begin its restoration. Thirty years later and the Brundall Garden has been transformed into a small paradise, lovingly brought back to life by the author.

In this book Janet tells the story of the garden from its origin in late Victorian times under the hand of Norfolk-born Dr Michael Beverley, a pioneer in preventive medicine. In 1881, Beverley purchased seventy-six acres of farmland in Brundall where he designed and built a series of ponds and rockeries from which water flowed down to a lake. Around these he planted shrubs and trees (many of them surviving today as specimen trees towering above the lake and garden) where a substantial house was built. In 1919, and now under the ownership of Frederick Cooper, a disastrous fire destroyed the original house and the impressive Redclyffe House was built. In 1924 Brundall Gardens railway station was opened nearby and in 1969 fire destroyed Redclyffe House. In the 1980s new houses were built overlooking the garden and it was at this time that Janet Muter arrived to begin the garden's restoration.

Now, regularly open to the public, the impressive gardens are a tribute to the ceaseless work of its owner. Over 60 000 people have visited, raising tens of thousands of pounds for charity. This lavishly illustrated book, recounting the author's fascinating story and packed full of wonderful photographs, will delight all gardeners and lovers of gardens – great and small.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

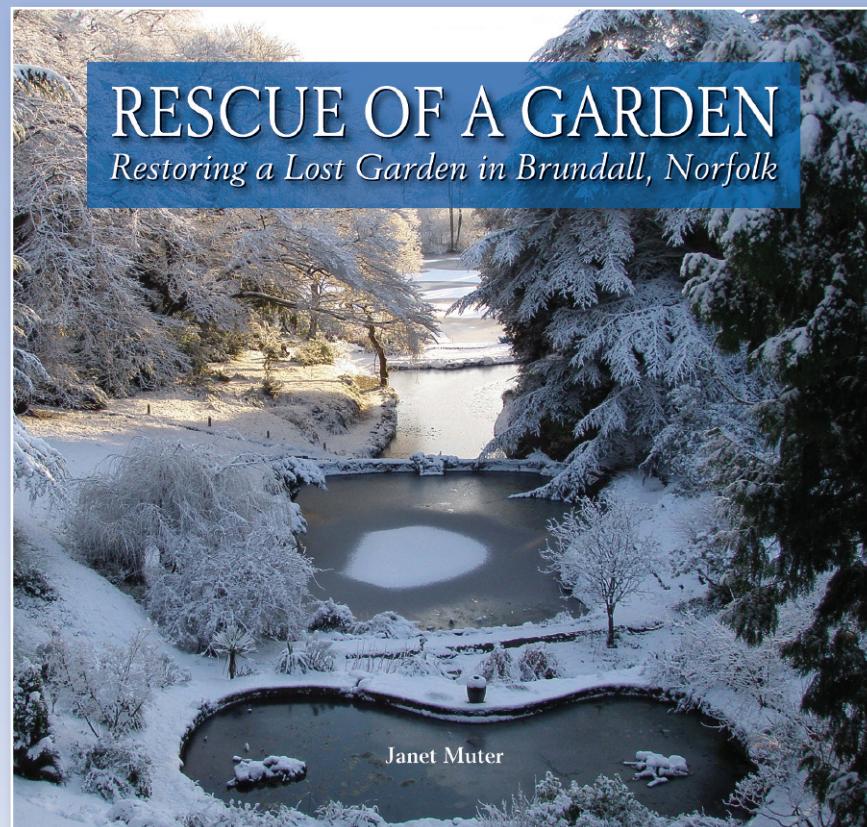
Janet Muter was born into a professional family in North London where she went to school. She inherited a love of gardens from her grandparents, a passion that years later, during two years teaching in a deprived area of Manchester, saw Janet carrying armfuls of flowers and foliage to school on the bus. The children loved it.

Later came marriage and a family, and with four young children but with no mod cons there was little time for gardening. It was only when aged forty, that Janet and her husband bought a large country house in Great Plumstead, Norfolk, for the family and the grandparents to share, that Janet found herself with four acres of garden to manage. Here she grew fruit and vegetables and started to exhibit her produce in local shows, while maintaining her formal garden with its manicured hedges and lawns. Then in the 1980s, and with the children now leaving home, Janet moved to Brundall – where this story really begins.

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Above: Rosa 'Smarty'

Above right: "And lo, the shining levels of the lake" *Polygonum campanulatum* is a good companion plant with purple loosestrife

Example of a double-page spread.



Right: After the Second World War

Below: May in paradise

