

## **The Evolution of Marigold Cottage Garden from 1983 - Present Day**

I bought Marigold Cottage from a friend in November 1983. At the time I was living and working in Japan, so I did not actually visit until June 1984! Actually, I did not live here full time until January 2001 as I continued to live and work overseas. After nine years in Japan, I moved to Istanbul, Turkey, where my husband, John had already been working for a year for Oxford University Press. We did a brief spell back in Oxford for two years, but then went back to the Far East, this time to Taiwan, The Republic of China where I stayed for another nine years.

During this time, we visited Marigold Cottage only in the summer time - I was fortunate to have long school holidays. My Mother, Betty Lee, who initially lived in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire and then in London kept an eye on the cottage, and oversaw all of the alterations to the house and garden. Together we planned and carried out all the planting work in the garden - a passion we shared till her death in 2005.

By 2005 John had returned from overseas. He has a passion for cooking and vegetable growing, so we are lucky to have our 'plot' and greenhouse which have proved to be very productive. Since 2002 we have opened the garden for charity - initially just for the National Gardens Scheme, but now we support a variety of charities each year. We also enjoy group visits from garden clubs, U3A, WI and other interested parties.

A garden never stands still, and although some years there have been major changes, there are always new ideas evolving, whether it is a new planting scheme or something more drastic such as digging up a lawn and putting in raised beds. This is not a low maintenance garden, but all the work is a labour of love and very rewarding. We get a great deal of pleasure from sharing it with visitors throughout the year.

Over the years we have had much help from like-minded people, and without their hard work and enthusiasm Marigold Cottage garden would not be the oasis it is today.

**Please come and visit the garden this year**

**Stephanie Lee and John Raby**