

SUSTAINABILITY AND RED HOUSE FARM IN GLAISDALE

Are We Sustainable? You can decide.

1. First, A Bit of History

Red House Farm has been here since--at least--**1748**. Red House Farm itself is listed and features in its unrestored state in *Houses of the North York Moors*, a publication authored by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments. We are told Red House is particularly interesting because it is, or was at the time of the publication (September 1987), the oldest house in this area that the Royal Commission had come across with a 'cross' passage rather than a longhouse construction. The Royal Commission felt the original owner, Franklin Coates, must have been a person who had travelled, probably to London, though possibly York, and returned with plans for the farmhouse. The Commission suggested that the building was constructed by a local builder, because the design--modern in 1748-- was then built using methods the Commission would have dated as one century earlier.

Our deeds show that the son inherited the farm and house in 1760, but one living room and one bedroom were left to the deceased's wife. The son was required to build a cupboard for his mother to house her crockery in, and a table for her to eat on, so he could inherit Red House. A cupboard, which originally would have had a drop leaf table, was constructed and still exists in our breakfast room.



2. Our Life And Work Here At Red House Farm since 1987

We (Tom & Sandra) have both lived and worked abroad and have travelled all over the world, so we were familiar with many desirable locations we could have settled in, but 1987 we chose here-- in the North York Moors National Park-- in a dilapidated Red House Farm in Glaisdale.

We have renewed, restored--saved-- Red House Farm with much loving care and a huge amount of hard work and financial investment.

It has been an amazing story for us, and fortunately, most of our guests have enjoyed it as well. Many have actually lived part of our story along with us, because they have been coming to us for such a long time--since 1991 in the main house B&B and from 1995 in the barn conversion when we first started letting the Old Sheaf Store.

Reclamation and Restoration

We have reclaimed and restored to keep ourselves and our business sustainable since 1991. All the wood floors are reclaimed wood. All the buildings have reclaimed red pan tiles--the house, the cottages, the pool, the barns. Most of the furniture, especially in the cottages, but also in the house, are reclaimed country style antiques which we bought at farm sales, local auctions and local reclamation merchants or local 'antique' merchants. We kept repairing, maintaining and restoring what was already here--dry stone walls, stone buildings, old troughs, farm implements, etc.

We've tried to keep the character of the place by using real farm implements--some of which were laid about the place--as decorations and useful fittings.

Here are just a few examples:



In the above photo of the kitchen area of the Old Sheaf Store, the towel rack is from the old wheel house, and other former farm implements are now the cooker hood above the hob and the wheel holding the cooking and frying pans.



Exterior photos of the sitting areas outside the Old Sheaf Store (above) and the entrance to the Threshing Barn (below) feature vintage implements that have been given new life, such as the old grinding stone outside The Old Sheaf Store and table bases, as well as the usual old troughs that have been made into planters and water features around both cottages..



As the barn also is listed, we chose to leave the original arch as an arch--had to have new doors (copied from the dilapidated originals) made for it, but better, we think, than enclosing it and making it modern.

When we had sheep, we used to close the big doors and make sections of pens for lambing in the spring. You can even see the little door that we use to get into the arch when the big doors are closed. Guests loved seeing the ewes and little lambs.

Shortly after we converted the barn, we were pleased to be awarded the Country Land and Business Association's 1999 Buildings Award for the conversion. Our conversion was the first to receive this award in the North York Moors National Park.

Tom even took up the 'modern' concrete farmyard surface and replaced it with stone and reclaimed local cobbles to further carry out the proper farmyard feel. All the drives are made from reclaimed stone.

Again, we hope you will enjoy seeing how we have tried to keep an agricultural feel when we have built additional buildings. Even when we have added new builds, we have used reclaimed stone or stone newly shaped from Grosmont quarry, reclaimed roof tiles and traditional exterior design to fit into the style of the existing buildings.

For example, the Longhorns' winter quarters are constructed of local stone that existed on site, and the finished swimming pool is constructed from a combination of herringbone stone from Grosmont quarry and rough-cut reclaimed sandstone to match the construction of the existing barns, and built to look on the outside like three agricultural buildings constructed at three different times, just as the cottage barn conversion would have been originally.

The cows we have are the Old English Longhorns and graze in sections of our fields eating the unimproved grassland--doing conservation grazing on much of which is ancient grassland.

The self-catering units are electrically heated, our supplier claiming to be 100% sustainable/renewable. Our backup heating is from woodstoves supplied by wood from pruning old dying trees, or coppicing and pollarding willows and poplars we planted for that purpose. We have managed without importing wood for several years now and hope to continue using our own seasoned wood for many more years to come.

Hope you've enjoyed these little snippets of our endeavours not only to be sustainable in our lifetime, but also to be regenerative for the future generations who come to live here.

Tom & Sandra Spashett

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These 'little snippets' from our experiences living and working here were originally jotted down in response to requests from our guests curious about us and our life here at Red House..